

20 Artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
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Jason Chan



ARTICLES

Sketchbook of Joel Carlo



INTERVIEWS

Craig Sellars, Jason Chan & Jan Dille Christensen



GALLERIES

Michael Kutsche, John Wallin Liberto, Levente Peterffy, plus more!



MAKING OF'S

'Head Hunter' by WanKok Leong, 'Half-Octopus Thief' by Chuck Wadey, plus more!



TUTORIALS

Speed Painting by Marc Brunet & Nick Oroc, plus more!



EDITORIAL

Welcome to Issue 030 – meaning a good two and a half years’ run! We’ve had a lot of great feedback about our magazines lately, which is always encouraging for the 2DArtist team, so we’ve gone all out and aimed to please again this month with our 30th issue! First up, I had requests from our lovely readers for an interview with the fantastic Massive Black artist, Jason Chan... So I got it for you

winks! Flick to **PAGE 013** for our in-depth interview with Jason Chan and check out the plethora of images that take his signature! There’s something about his skill for painting life into a character that never fails to impress, and I’m sure you’ll all take some inspiration away from his words and works this month. I also stumbled across the talents of Craig Sellars recently and excitedly e-mailed him for an interview, and here we have it for you today! When I see a really great piece of art I “feel” it. I sit bolt upright in my chair and my heart starts to beat that little bit faster... When I first saw Craig’s work I got that thrill, and I’m sure that when you get to **PAGE 006** you’ll see exactly what I mean! You get a real sense of awe and wonderment from Craig’s images; the kind of images that just feel “epic”. Have a look for yourself and let me know if you’ve discovered any other artists’ work lately that sends shivers down your spine, and I’ll see if I can get in touch with them for 2DArtist! We take all requests seriously, so if you’ve always wanted to see something in 2DArtist, then you’ll have nothing to lose by dropping me an email (I promise to reply to all emails – as long as they’re not spam!). Our third interview is with Jan Ditlev Christensen, who has yet another awesome portfolio for our eyes to feast on! Jan is a Concept Artist for Deadline Games and you’ll find out all about him, along with lots of useful insights into the creation of his works, on **PAGE 025**. Our Speed Painting Challenge this month is also nothing short of amazing – seriously! We asked two top artists, Marc Brunet and Nick Oroc, to each tackle the brief, “It was a long way up but they had no choice but to continue climbing!” Really great results from both artists, but then we expected no less from these guys really! Mike Corriero this month takes us into the construction of the eyes and mouth as he tackles the head design of his Creature Concept [**PAGE 098**], and we wave farewell to Tiberius Viris as he rounds up the Matte Painting Tutorial series for us with his “tips and tricks” for all our budding matte painters. Robin Olausson also brings us a wonderful tutorial on Perspective, which is great for beginners or those who have been dabbling with digital art but finding their images a little “off”. Take a look and you might just find out where you’ve been going wrong [**PAGE 106**]. We have 4 Making Of’s for you again with great artists such as Chuck Wadey and Marcel Baumann, but finally I’d like to mention our massive sketchbook article from Joel Carlo... We are very pleased to be able to represent a huge spread of Joel’s sketchbook work this month; he kindly sent us this great portfolio of work and we simply couldn’t bear to cut any of it down, so we pretty much put our ‘crazy hats’ on and put together the mega article that you’ll find on **PAGE 033**. Wow, I’m exhausted... **ENJOY! ED.**

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Digital Art Masters Free Chapter Promotion

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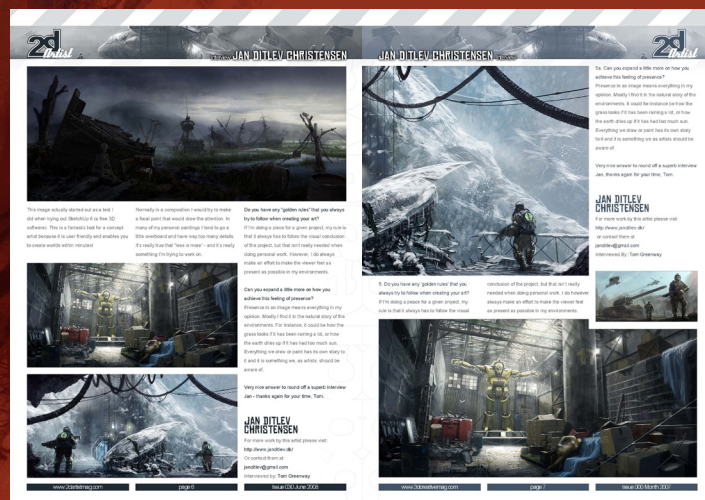
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If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader...



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3. Select **TWO-UP CONTINUOUS**, making sure that **SHOW COVER PAGE** is also selected.

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Every month, many artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist Magazine. Here you can read all about them! If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazines, please contact:
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Joel Carlo

Is a multimedia developer residing out in Denver, Colorado. His career as an artist has spanned over the last 14 years and includes work in both traditional and digital media, web design, print, and motion graphics for broadcasting. His client list is varied and ranges from Commissioned work for small studio projects to larger clients such as Future Publishing, Burrows & Chapin, The Ayzenberg Group, NASCAR, Dodge, Toyota and Fox Television.

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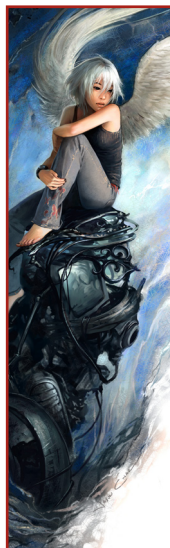


Jason Chan

is an up and coming freelance illustrator and a full-time concept artist with Massive Black Inc. Jason strives to blend aesthetics of both eastern and western art styles together to create memorable and striking images. A believer that art should be fuelled by purpose, Jason strives to fill his work with emotions, fantasies, fears, life, love and death, to best entertain his audience.

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Jan Ditlev Christensen

is a Concept Artist working for a company called "Deadline Games", situated in Denmark. He attended the Kent Institute of Art and Design (UK) and graduated as a Production Designer from the Danish Design School (DK). His work includes conceptual art for characters and environments, storyboarding for a number of short films, illustrations for children books and matte painting.

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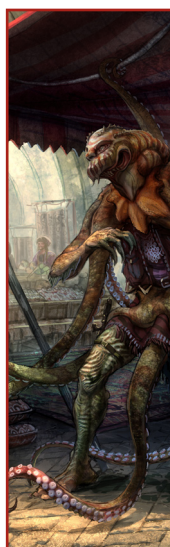


Chuck Wadey

After graduating from the Art Center College of Design in 2001, Chuck Wadey got his start in game concept art by working on Activision's Spider-Man franchise. In 2006 he spent a year as a freelance concept artist, working on miscellaneous projects. Now he's the Art Director/Illustrator for Challenge Games where he works on casual web games, such as www.duels.com.

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Nicolas Oro

resides in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He currently works at A2M as a senior concept artist/illustrator. With 11 years experience as an artist, he's worked in publishing, advertising, and for the last 6 years in gaming. Within 4 years of experience at Ubisoft Montreal, he's worked on titles such as Prince of Persia "Warrior Within", Rainbow Six "Lock Down" & "Vegas", and preproduction on Splinter Cell next gen.

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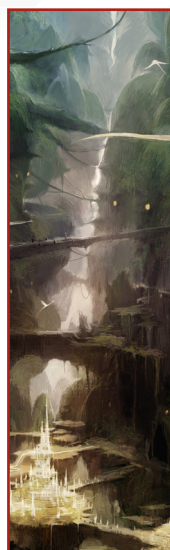
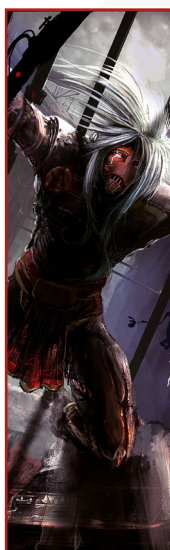


Robin Olausson

is a 22 year old freelance concept artist/illustrator from the South of Sweden. He's a highly motivated, self-educated person who always love new challenges. In the future he hopes to get work in the games industry, publish his own comics, and become one of the top designers and illustrators!

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Yap Kun Rong

is 21 years old and currently residing in Japan. It has always been his dream to go into the visual arts sector, and he is currently working as a freelancer and studying. He wants to see, learn and understand more, and hopes to get into the games and movie industry to "breathe life" into his visions in the future.

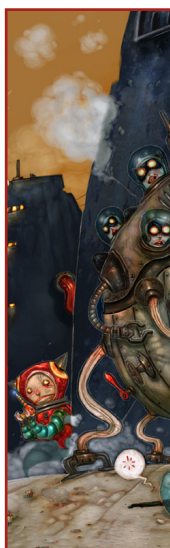
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Leong Wan Kok

is an award-winning illustrator, specialising in character design and illustration. His work can be seen in various media, including art prints, illustrations, posters and comics, and he boasts a client list from both local areas and overseas. Sculpting is also one of his great passions.

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Mike Corriero

Currently, Mike produces assets as a Freelance artist for various companies including everything from creatures, environments, structures, illustrations and icons. Some of his clients include Radical Entertainment, ImagineFX and Liquid Development to which he has contributed work for projects delivered to Flagship Studios and Ensemble Studios through the art direction and outsourcing of LD

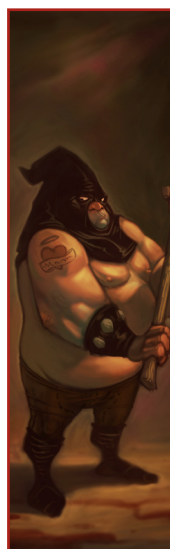
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Tiberius Viris

is currently working as a Freelance Matte Painter/CG Artist for both the feature film and games industries, and also as an Environment Illustrator for various projects and clients. His work has also been featured in several prestigious books, such as Expose 5 and D'Artiste Matte Painting 2.

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Patri Balanovsky

Is a Production/Concept Artist at PitchiPoy Animation Studios, Tel-Aviv, in Israel. He's been drawing & painting since he can remember; creating characters, creatures & fantastic scenes has always been a passion of his. Telling a whole story through a single image can be quite a challenge, but he's always up for it! Keeping his work fresh & versatile, he explores all sorts of genres, styles & attitudes.

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A digital painting of a man in a space suit. He has a mustache and is wearing goggles. He is holding a device in his right hand. The background is dark and atmospheric.

"WHEN I PLAN AN IMAGE,
ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS
I CONSIDER IS THE
LIGHTING SITUATION AND
IF THERE IS SOMETHING
I'VE SEEN THAT CAN BE
APPLIED TO THE IMAGE AT
HAND."

Craig Sellars has a background in Industrial Design and has worked in a number of sectors of the CG industry, with clients ranging from Walt Disney Animation to Electronic Arts. He is currently employed as a production designer in the games industry and also works freelance.

Craig
Sellars

Craig Sellars

Tell us a little about your current job as a production designer in the games industry. What does it entail?

I am still doing all the tasks normally associated with a concept position, such as character, environment, vehicle and prop designs, but my involvement during both the pre-production and especially the production process is much more involved. While specific job titles and roles vary from studio to studio, I am part of a small group of key people in the development of a new IP from the ground up. Along with another colleague, I work closely with the Art Director of the project on the overall visual plan, as well as how to achieve it. Because we have key involvement with the development of the idea so early on, we can tailor the visual design alongside the game play and story creation. The idea is that we can make a much more cohesive product where the visual design compliments, and ultimately enhances, the story and gameplay experience.

Your digital concepts appear to be finely balanced between realism and a painterly quality. Can you enlighten us as to how you achieve this effect and the kinds of brushes and approaches you typically use?

I think this can be attributed to the fact that



I learned to paint from looking at traditional illustrators who worked with gouache. When I first made the transition into digital painting, I still tended to think in terms of these old school techniques and worked as if it were an opaque medium. I've since started using greater amounts of transparent brushwork to achieve

things such as the subtle value transitions or shifts in hue that tend to move the work toward realism. That also includes dropping in transparent layers, sometimes made up of photos or just a loose texture, in an abstract way to achieve that random but subtle detail that contributes to realism.





In terms of brushes, for the most part in the past I used the standard Photoshop brush set (like the hard round or spatter brush). I have picked up some other brushes over the years and have recently started to create new brushes to achieve certain textures and emulate certain materials more quickly. I also work with a couple of amazing concept artists, Mike Sebalj and Thomas Pringle, who I've learned a ton from as well. I always get inspired by working with other artists and these guys are no exception.

You mention the importance of other artists in your development. If you had to name a handful of key influences in your life, whether it be an individual painting, a certain film, a specific experience etc., what would they be and why? I've been inspired by the works of a lot of artists. From a pure painting standpoint, a big one is

John Singer Sargent. He was huge with all the artists at Disney. I was lucky enough to see an exhibition of some of his works in LA once and his ability to capture light and form with such economy of brushwork is incredible. As a student in Industrial Design, I was introduced to the work of Syd Mead, who was also an inspiration. He is the master of designing convincing objects, because he has a complete understanding of how real things are made.

Some traditional illustrators that influenced me were Robert McGinnis, Stanley Meltzoff and, of course, Ralph MacQuarrie. I studied his paintings and renderings for hours on end while I was growing up. In terms of films, *Star Wars*, as for so many artists, was a huge inspiration, but other films

with unique or strong visual design such as *Dark City*, *Brazil*, and *2001* were also influential.

There seems to be a definite reference to the late forties and early fifties in a number of your concept pieces, barring the western and fantasy themed paintings off course. Can you explain the ideas behind some of the work?

I think I tend to gravitate to that genre in my personal work because it is so different from the type of material I create in games. I am a big fan of old school sci-fi films and old pulp illustration. They seem to have a warm, evocative feeling to them, but are looked on as kind of campy or even cheesy. I guess I like the idea of taking those design cues and visual elements and giving them a serious or more realistic treatment.





A few of your concepts appear “deceptively simple” in terms of the convincing lighting. Are all the scenes purely fictitious or are some based on real life locations or photographs, such as the office interior for example?

When it comes to lighting, I try to take note of interesting light situations in real life, films, photos and books. When I plan an image, one of the first things I consider is the lighting situation and if there is something I’ve seen that can be applied to the image at hand. I always try to create a lighting situation which will effectively “stage” what I imagine may be occurring in the scene. This is something I learned as a layout

artist at Disney. They are so great at designing simple lighting situations that not only tell a story but are graphically interesting.

All the scenes in my work are fictitious, but definitely inspired by things I have seen. The office image is, once again, inspired by old pulpy detective stories.

With reference to particular examples, could you elaborate on this theory and explain how your narrative has dictated your choice of lighting?

In cases where a concept is intended to strictly illustrate a design, the lighting tends

to be designed primarily to showcase the environment, object or character so it can be built. But in more story-driven illustrations or pre-production paintings, lighting is carefully staged to illicit a mood or an emotional response. Examples of this could be strong, high-contrast lighting with sharp, angular patterns of light and shadow thrown about the environment. From a visual language stand point, these strong angular shapes can evoke chaos or imply a dangerous or foreboding situation. Another example of a lighting design scenario is the use of light over dark, or dark over light. Specifically, this is used in staging the scene of the robot





in the detective's office. I imagined that in this scene the man and woman in the foreground are at a pivotal moment and their intentions toward the robot and his companion are unclear. To illustrate this I threw them into shadow and they become silhouetted against the light wall behind them. They are not clearly visible, nor are their intentions.

It is common to find a number of concept artists in the entertainment sector who have a background in Industrial Design. Why do you think this is and what benefit has it been to your present career?

I think a background or even an understanding of Industrial Design is a huge asset for a concept artist in the entertainment biz. Because an Industrial Designer has an understanding of how things in the real world are constructed, it lends an extra level of believability to a design - which is something I think is lacking in some games. Even when dealing with sci-fi or fantasy,



a solid understanding of how things would be constructed or how they work can make the difference between a design that feels solid, strong and convincing, and one that seems arbitrary and vague.

What game examples do you feel demonstrate some of the most interesting and plausible design concepts with respect to the environments and characters alike?

Lost Planet and *Half Life2* are both good

examples of this, but I think *Mass Effect* is the best recent example. Not only do the visuals have a distinct and cohesive style, but more specifically, a lot of the designs look like they could work; they make sense. They may still be a bit fantastic, but they look believable and convincing. You can really tell that someone sat down and thought about what the functions of these objects or environments were and how they would work.

However, there are also games where the design is unrealistic and not plausible, such as *God of War*, but in this case it is an exaggerated stylistic thing which, if all aspects of the design follow true to this, also works really well.

In what ways does working in film differ to the games industry, in terms of being a concept artist?

In film there is a real established structure to the concept design process. The Art Director





and/or Production Designer are really in tune with the story early on and all of the visual design is created to serve the narrative first and foremost. In games development, visual design in particular tends to be an iterative process. That is by no means meant to say that things don't change in film, but the nature of game development, in my experience, requires a lot of trial and error. Concepts often change to accommodate that.

Do you find that the amount of revision required when developing a game can become a limiting factor, in terms of imposed technical restrictions during the design process? Or is it in fact the opposite case?

It can work both ways. There are definitely times that an overall design of a character or environment is compromised due to an unforeseen technical limitation. There are other times when foreseen technical limitations, such as the way an environment must be constructed in a modular fashion, can lead you to a unique design you may not have come up with otherwise. I think the key is recognising limitations early and planning for them.

If you had the choice, what kind of film or game would be your ideal project and why?

I would love to work on a period piece - maybe a film noir project or a western. Something like that would be interesting because the visual language or iconography of these genres are already so established and understood that, as an artist, you could spend most of your time manipulating and playing with these ideas to create a real emotional impact.

CRAIG SELLARS

For more work by this artist please visit:

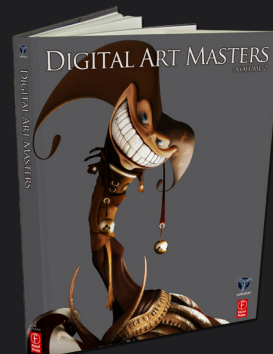
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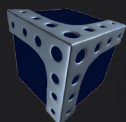
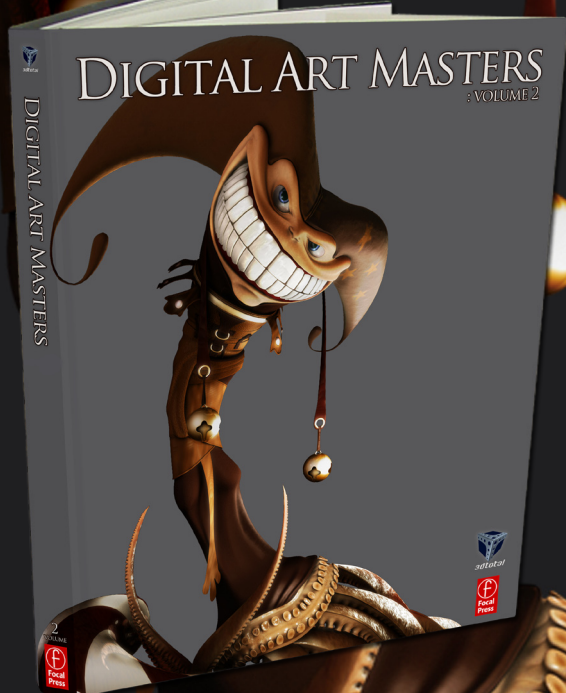
FEATURES 58 OF THE FINEST DIGITAL
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THE INDUSTRY TODAY, FROM THE
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SHOWS."

JASON CHAN

At 2DArtist we welcome all kinds of suggestions from our readers, and we recently had the pleasure of receiving requests for an interview with the popular and talented artist, Jason Chan. Jason has very kindly agreed to let us interview him for this month's issue, so let's get down to business!

JASON CHAN

Hi Jason! Thanks so much for agreeing to this interview. Without a shadow of a doubt, I know that you're making many of our readers happy little bunnies this month! Now for those who aren't familiar with your background as an artist, I should really start off by asking you to tell us a little about yourself and how you came to find yourself where you are today ...

Well, I'm a freelance illustrator and a concept artist for Massive Black Inc. As a kid, I was really into movies and video games and I started learning 3D. I enrolled at the Academy of Art University of San Francisco, with 3D as my major, but soon switched to illustration – my true passion – and got a BFA. I've been freelancing for a number of years now. Most of that work is focussed in the fantasy and sci-fi market.

I started off doing small projects and RPGs, and have since moved on to do some trading card games like "Magic: The Gathering", and a number of book covers. I recently did some sequential work that appeared in the extras of the movie *I Am Legend*. For the past couple of years I have been working full-time next to a number of amazing artists at Massive Black Inc. as a concept artist for games and movies.

So you originally started out studying 3D, but soon switched over to illustration. What was it that made you realise, "Hey, this isn't for me!"? Do you have any advice for any other artists out there who might be thinking of making a similar switch, and how do you think the opportunities between the two genres differ in today's CG industry?

Well, growing up when 3D was taking off and new technology was constantly allowing filmmakers to turn out new special FX in movies, like *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator 2*, I was really excited at the idea that I could be



involved in something like that. But at the same time I loved coming up with characters and creatures, and just drawing in general. I don't think I really realised I could do that as a job. When I finally did realise I could be a concept artist, I felt a bit discouraged because I learned how hard it was to get in the field, so I decided to learn 3D. But once I was in school, I found that I did in fact have some drawing skill after all and my teachers and peers encouraged me to go for it as an illustrator and concept artist.

Now that I'm working in a studio with both concept artists and 3D artists, I can see that there is a big difference. 2D artists are the idea guys! Our job is to come up with ways to show what the client wants. They might not necessarily be our own ideas, but the job is a little bit more creative than the 3D team's. Their job is to take our concepts and recreate them in 3D. While there may be less freedom in this, it can be very rewarding to see this idea brought to life. Also, this will be the finished product that the public gets to see. I think both jobs are cool, just for different reasons.

As for finding work – I'm not sure, but I'd bet it'd be easier to get a job as a 3D artist just because there is so much demand for 3D work in games and movies!



Many 2D artists employ 3D techniques and tools in their works to gauge things such as scale, perspective, backgrounds and so on. From your brush with the 3D world, did you pick up anything there that you are now able to recall and utilise in your 2D practice? Or do you keep the two very separate?

I think that working in 3D can definitely help you understand form and perspective a bit better. After I stopped studying 3D, I pretty much stopped using any 3D at all in my work. However, lately I have been tempted to brush up on it and use some 3D elements if it will save time or make things easier on a project.

So it seems pretty obvious for me to mention anime at this point. I wonder: what is it about anime that originally captured your heart, and what is it in anime that continues to drive and

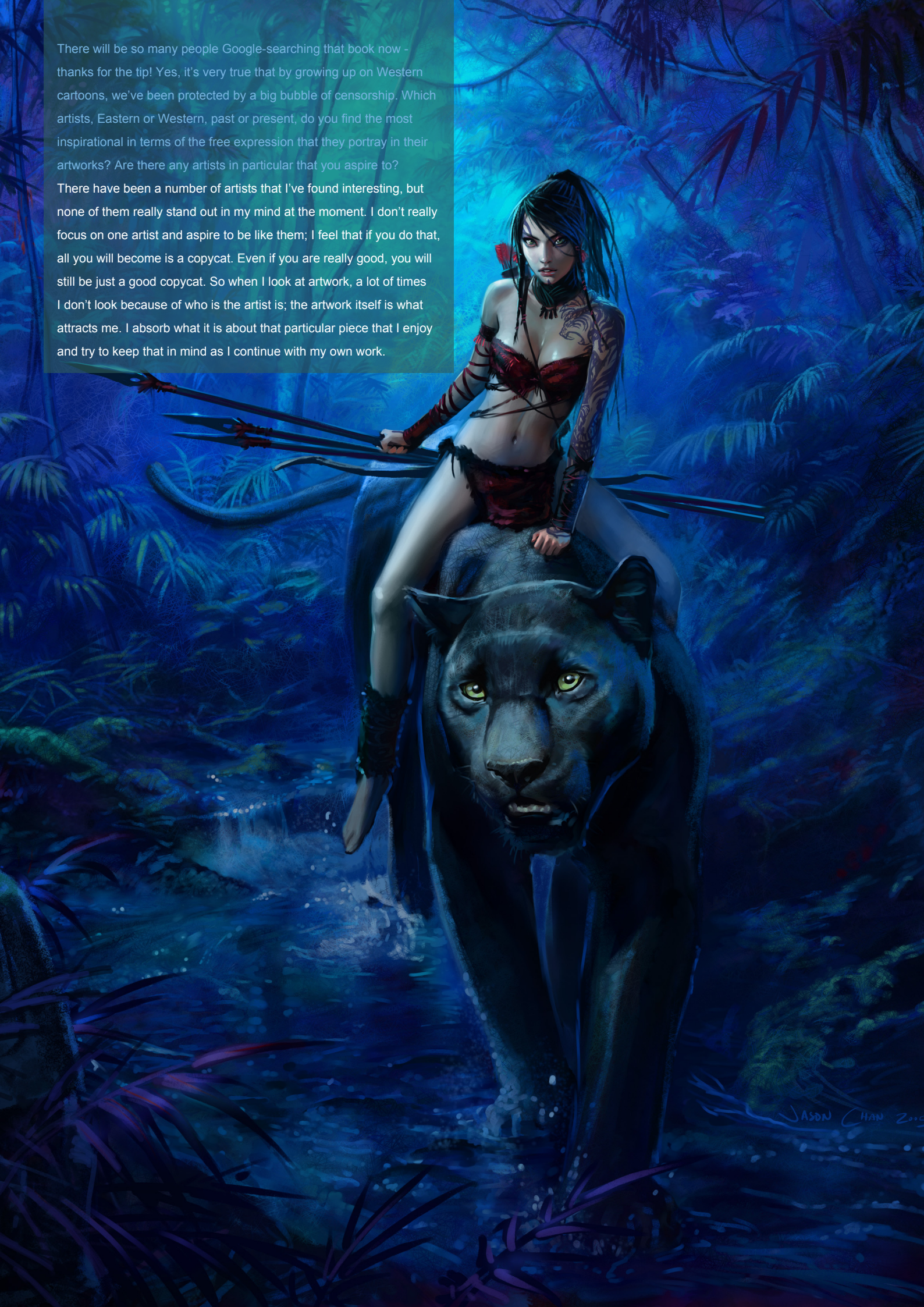


inspire so many of your great artworks today? Do you have any examples of your favourite anime films and books that we can check out?

Since I was a kid, I've always had a fascination with anime, manga, and just Japanese and Asian culture in general. I'm Chinese, but I was born and raised in America and I've never been to Asia (yet). I just find that all of the rules of Western culture don't necessarily apply to Eastern culture and, to me, that's interesting. When you grow up on American cartoons by Disney or Warner Bros, and suddenly you watch *Neon Genesis Evangelion* or *Akira*, they just blow you away! I just thought to myself, "They're not afraid to express their ideas!" The very adult and sometimes shocking content in anime really appealed to me, because I was suddenly aware of how safe and censored our media was. To me, anime symbolised free expression.

And a good book I think everyone should own is *Rakugaking* by Katsuya Terada. It's a 1000-page compilation of sketchbook pages by Terada.

There will be so many people Google-searching that book now - thanks for the tip! Yes, it's very true that by growing up on Western cartoons, we've been protected by a big bubble of censorship. Which artists, Eastern or Western, past or present, do you find the most inspirational in terms of the free expression that they portray in their artworks? Are there any artists in particular that you aspire to? There have been a number of artists that I've found interesting, but none of them really stand out in my mind at the moment. I don't really focus on one artist and aspire to be like them; I feel that if you do that, all you will become is a copycat. Even if you are really good, you will still be just a good copycat. So when I look at artwork, a lot of times I don't look because of who is the artist is; the artwork itself is what attracts me. I absorb what it is about that particular piece that I enjoy and try to keep that in mind as I continue with my own work.



You mention in your bio that since falling for anime and studying Western culture, you have been aiming to “marry” the two together in your artwork. Can you give us an example of how you go about marrying East with West in your work? How do you tackle and embrace this in your everyday practice as an artist?

I don't know if I do it as often as I would like, but I do try to incorporate some Asian aesthetics into my work whenever possible. I must admit that this has probably died down somewhat over the past few years, simply due to what clients want from my work. Basically, there are certain aesthetics that are different. For one, a lot of Asian art is about line, shape, and design. Western art, on the other hand, is generally about form and technical accuracy. Another example is that in America, to depict an attractive female we try to make her overly sexy and naughty, whereas in Asia they use a delicate mix of sexiness and innocence. This is probably the more obvious one that I use.

Having been browsing your Gallery in awe, I'm totally in love with the “life force” that you manage to capture in every single one of your images. Even though the characters that you paint are quite clearly anime in style and therefore our brains don't instantly perceive them to be “real” (in realistic terms!), there is a sense of life behind each character that is completely undeniable. In a way, you actually manage to paint situations and characters in an even more “real” way than if they were painted hyper-realistically! What elements of characters, and the situations that you paint, are “key” in making sure you capture this sense of life? For example, is it all in the eyes...?

I'm glad that you feel this way! That is another thing that drew me toward Asian art: I found that even though anime and manga did not look realistic, it was somehow able to express more emotion than realistic western art was able to.

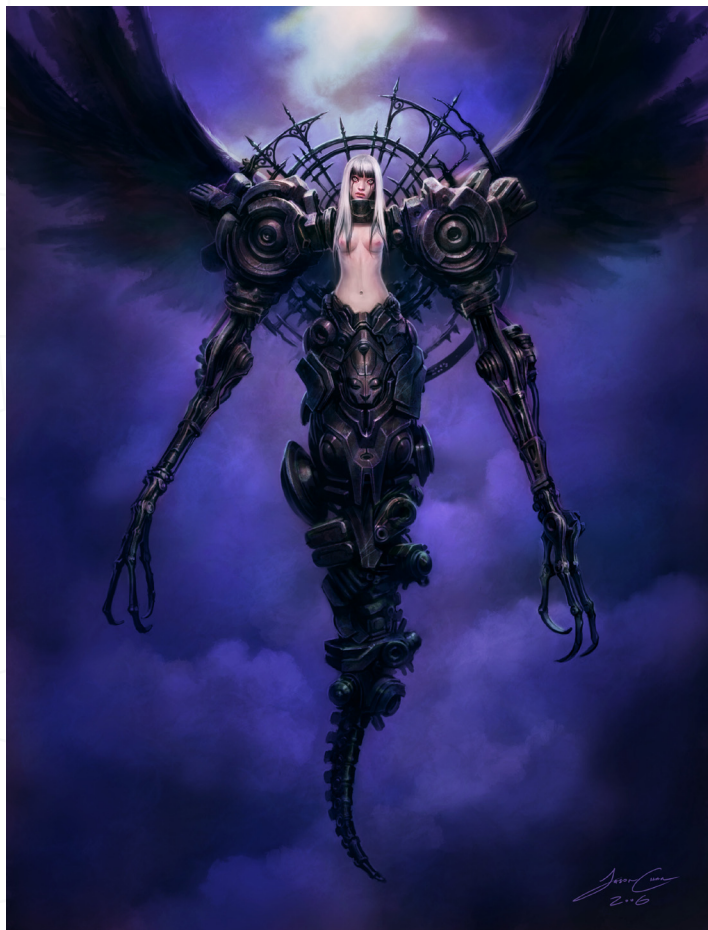
For me, I suppose it is all about the eyes... I like to draw faces in a certain way that is probably not common in normal humans. I find that this slightly “off” look catches your attention more than a completely normal face, and is thus is more memorable and interesting. As for all of



the emotion behind an image, I think that is brought about by every stroke that goes into creating it. If there is no emotion behind something I'm painting, it shows.

Okay, so do you have to get into a specific frame of mind for each piece that you create, and literally throw yourself into it? Do many of your artworks actually represent your own personal thoughts and feelings, or are you able to adopt the mindset of your characters to be able to feel your way through a painting? That also makes me wonder: do you find that you can give as much emotion to a digital painting as you can to a traditional one, or is there a certain distance that the monitor creates? Yes, if you want to create a successful painting, you have to be giving it 110%. This can be tricky when you are working professionally, as you are most likely not going to be working on things you enjoy all of the time. When I run into this problem, it's all about finding something in the image that I can find some fun in and just concentrating on that. It can actually be really rewarding to take an idea that you are not too fond of, or even dislike, and turning it into a piece of art that you are satisfied with.

My personal work is usually jump-started by something – either an emotion or an idea - but I tend to play it up beyond what I really feel, just for a stronger effect. Sometimes the emotion in my work is not really something I'm feeling, but just something I want the viewer to feel because



I believe the painting will be stronger that way. Working digitally does not make this too difficult for me. In fact, I find it easier to do this in digital work than in analogue work because I am free to adjust my painting in lots of different ways that are both much quicker and non-permanent.

Your understanding of anatomy is clearly demonstrated in all of your artworks and I notice from your bio that you studied life drawing at art school. Do you have any advice for artists out there, who perhaps don't have access to life drawing classes but would like to learn? And how do you keep "topping up" your knowledge on a day-to-day basis? How important do you find an understanding of anatomy to be in today's CG industry?

You must understand anatomy. Period. You might not need to know the names of everything, but you should have a pretty good understanding of how it looks and works. Get some books. I have a number of anatomy





books and specific anatomy books for artists. There are a lot out there and most of them are pretty decent. Study from those; learn the names of the muscles and their functions. Draw every image in that book multiple times until you know the human body like the back of your eyelids. It's a lot of work but it's got to be done if you want to be able to draw people. To keep yourself "in shape", you can sketch in public. I take a train to work everyday and I always have a small sketchbook with me so I can draw people I see. Draw at a cafe or in the park. There are people everywhere, so it's not hard.

Well it sounds like art is your life and life is your art, but let's say we happen to find you far away from the computer and your sketchbook... What would we find you doing to relax and get a bit of "me" time in before the next big deadline? When I'm not doing art I'm spending time with my family or my girlfriend. I'm also an avid gamer, a movie watcher, and I like to read when I get the chance.

I wanted to mention one of my favourite images from your gallery: *Pandora's Box*. This image demonstrates such a beautiful sense of scale



and a true understanding of light and colour, as well as emotion and anatomy. Could you briefly walk us through some of the fundamental basics that you consider when starting a new image? Well, the first thing I think about is the idea. What am I trying to say with this image? For this one, I wanted to depict the despair of Pandora as she opens the box and unleashes all of the world's evils. The next thing I think about is composition. What will look good and help to tell this story? For this image, I ended up composing it like she is falling and drowning in a suffocating darkness with the box's evil seeping out above her, polluting her environment.



From there, it's just an exercise of technical knowledge. I have to consider anatomy, acting, and clothing behaviour for Pandora. I have to know how stuff looks underwater. I have to understand light and shadow as well as colour theory. All of these things, and more, come into play as I "render" the image to final.

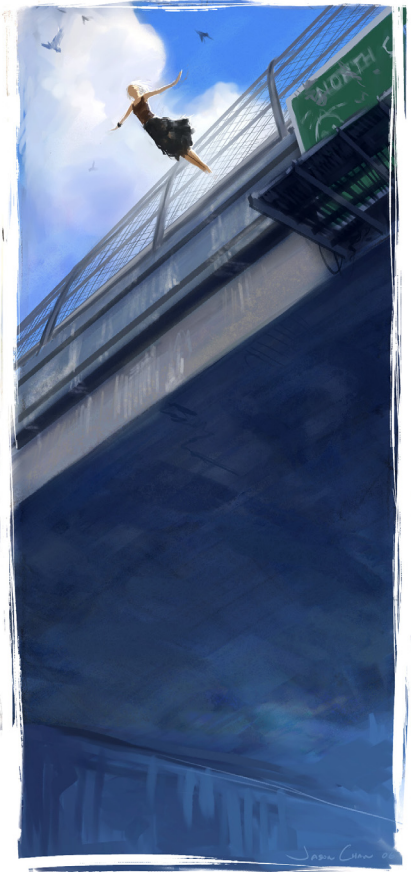
When you say you have to consider and understand anatomy, light, colour and so on, are these all things that you have a well-developed sense for at this stage in your career? If so, can you pretty much get straight to work from the reference library that you have stored in your mind, or do you still do a big reference search before starting each new piece?

I still like to use references. I don't always use models or anything, but I do gather references for inspiration. For example, if I'm drawing cars in my image, I will need references of cars so that I understand how they are made and how light and colour reacts on their surfaces. I might not draw the same car, but I learn something from my references that I can apply to my image. If I am drawing people, I might find references of people with features I want to include and just use those ideas as reference. I only take specific photo references for complex poses that I have trouble drawing picturing in my own mind.

From your blog we can see that you quite recently created a remake of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*. How hard was it to take on a masterpiece such as this and give it your own spin?

Not that hard, actually. The basic composition has already been established, so it's all about changing the elements. Composition is probably the hardest step for me, so having that step taken care of really makes things a lot simpler!

Wow, I never would have guessed that you struggled with composition - all of your images seem extremely well composed. It's good to have something that makes you work hard though. What steps do you take to help improve



your understanding of composition and do you have or use any "golden rules" that you might be able to share with us here?

I just spend a good amount of time on this step when I can. I try to come up with new compositions that are more interesting and dynamic than things I've done before, but most of the time I find myself falling back into a safe composition. I'm still working on it. Many of my compositions rely on the rule of thirds and just central or pyramid compositions.

Finally, after thanking you for this lovely interview, can I just ask: if you hadn't discovered manga and anime, do you think the western approach to art would have eventually dampened your desire to draw? Or is this art in your blood and would have found its way through to paper/screen somehow or another? Oh, of course not! Although I love art from Asia, that does not mean I don't enjoy Western art. My style might have been a bit different, but my love of art would be just as strong.



Thanks so much for all this insight, Jason. We look forward to seeing more from you soon!

JASON CHAN

For more work by this artist please visit:

www.jasonchanart.com

Or contact them at:

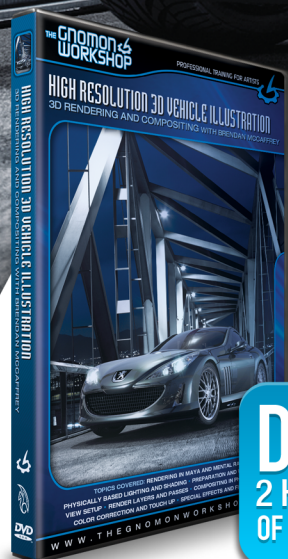
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JAN DITLEV CHRISTENSEN



Jan Ditlev Christensen is a concept artist currently working in the video games industry. He receives his briefs like anyone else, but as you read on you will realise that Jan meets the briefs by focusing on emotion, weaving in a sense of presence and producing consistently fantastic work ...

JAN DITLEV CHRISTENSEN

Hey Jan! You're a bit of a mystery because the "about" section on your website just contains one picture of yourself, so could you please tell us a little bit about your background and what you are doing now?

Ha yes! I see what you mean. My website is under reconstruction and there are some things that have yet to be updated. Well, I trained as a production designer at the Danish Design School, and have been working as a concept artist for a game company called Deadline



Games for more than a year now. It is a great place, situated in Copenhagen next to an old military harbour. It has been amazing (and a surprise!) to see how much influence concept artists actually have in the production of computer games.

Since I was a kid I've always loved to draw and paint. My father was really good with a pencil and my older brother wasn't half bad. My brother and I always used to challenge each other to see who the best drawer was and it was here - I believe - that I found some kind of foundation for my drawing skills.

Which artists have influenced you the most?

There are a lot! But there are a couple of artists that stand out. Traditional painters such as P.S. Krøyer and Rembrandt have really impressed me and have had a big influence on how I see colours and light. The first time I saw Craig Mullins and John Wallin I was blown away, and I realised that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.



You appear to pay particular attention to weather elements in your scenes - there's many a stormy sky in your galleries. Is there any particular reason for this or is it something you just enjoy?

It is funny, but I didn't used to pay much attention to the sky in my paintings. Now it is something that I spend a long time trying to get right. It really is a common mistake to neglect the sky in paintings. It is here that the light source that will help determine our colour palette is found.

Do you rely heavily on references for the skies? Or do you use them less and less the more you work?

It varies from painting to painting, and also depends on what mood I am in. Sometimes I find that it is best to simply drag a photo of a sky into my canvas and paint on top. But most of the time I do paint my own skies.

When creating your art, do you have a set process that you follow each time?

Yes! I mostly spend some time thinking of about

a subject that I would like to paint. At work I am normally given certain guidelines as to what is needed. Then I research the subject by looking at photos or taking a walk with my camera. Before I start I always do a series of thumbnail sketches and from there choose the one I think will work the best.

When creating the final painting, I always begin by establishing my horizontal eye level. To do this, I make a sky and then insert a ground. This could be painted or it could come from photos





that have been fitted to my horizontal line. If I haven't done this on top of my original sketch, I would then paint my thumbnail back in. This is where I block in shapes and basically make a more detailed thumbnail. It is also here that I make my perspective guidelines so I know that I am painting using proper perspectives.

Photo textures and photos are transformed into perspective and overlaid with a "High Pass", set

to 28,0. (Filters>Others>High Pass). Now I can paint underneath my overlaid texture without adding a darker tone as overlay normally tends to do.

From here on it's a constant flipping of canvas and refinements which can go on for days before I sit with a final piece that I'm satisfied with.

Wow! That's a great answer - almost like a guide for beginners. Is this process self taught or were you lucky enough to have someone to guide you?

It is actually a combination of all kind of things that I've learned along the way. One should always be open to learning more. For me it has primarily been my education, watching Gnomon DVDs and working every day to improve my skills. When I first began to do digital painting



on the computer I kept crashing and burning. I copied a lot of other artists' work in the hope that I would begin to understand how they painted. I then wrote to some of them and asked if they would look at my work - often forgetting to mention that it was copy-work of their own work. I was really surprised how nice Dylan Cole was about it, given that I had just stolen his work and asked him to look at it! I guess what I am trying to say is that as artists, we do fail from time to

time and it is okay as long as we keep pushing ourselves to improve and refuse to give up.

An image that particularly caught my eye is your panoramic Hong Kong concept. Can you tell us a little more about this image?

At the time I did this image I was playing a video game called *Stranglehold*, which is a Hong Kong Action Shooter by film director John Woo. The game looks a lot like *Total Overdose*, which

is a game that my company made a couple of years back.

Anyway, I felt inspired by some of the environments and went to research them on Google. The contrasts within Hong Kong was one of the things that really fascinated me - such as the concentration of neon lights in contrast to the dark, poorly-lit buildings - and I made me want to produce my own image.



This image actually started out as a test I did when trying out SketchUp 6 (a free 3D software). This is a fantastic tool for a concept artist because it is user friendly and enables you to create worlds within minutes!

Normally in a composition I would try to make a focal point that would draw the attention. In many of my personal paintings I tend to go a little overboard and have way too many details. It's really true that "less is more" - and it's really something I'm trying to work on.

Do you have any "golden rules" that you always try to follow when creating your art?

If I'm doing a piece for a given project, my rule is that it always has to follow the visual conclusion of the project, but that isn't really needed when doing personal work. However, I do always make an effort to make the viewer feel as present as possible in my environments.



Can you expand a little more on how you achieve this feeling of presence?

Presence in an image means everything in my opinion. Mostly I find it in the natural story of the environments. For instance, it could be how the grass looks if it has been raining a lot, or how the earth dries up if it has had too much sun. Everything we draw or paint has its own story to it and it is something we, as artists, should be aware of.



Very nice answer to round off a superb interview Jan - thanks again for your time, Tom.

JAN DITLEV CHRISTENSEN

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.janditlev.dk/>

Or contact them at:

janditlev@gmail.com

Interviewed by: Tom Greenway

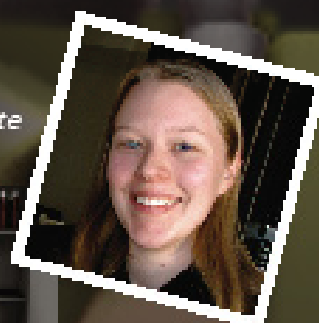
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HUMAN BODY AND
ANATOMY. WHICH IS WHY
A GOOD PORTION OF
MY SKETCHES INVOLVE
FIGURE STUDIES."



After
Baronessa, Annunziata
Leola with the Swan
16/50

the Sketchbook of Joel Carlo

In this article, Joel Carlo tells us about his approach to drawing and how he works in his sketchbooks. He talks about some of the thought processes behind the artwork he has created and we get to see the images of some of Carlo's best sketchbook works ..

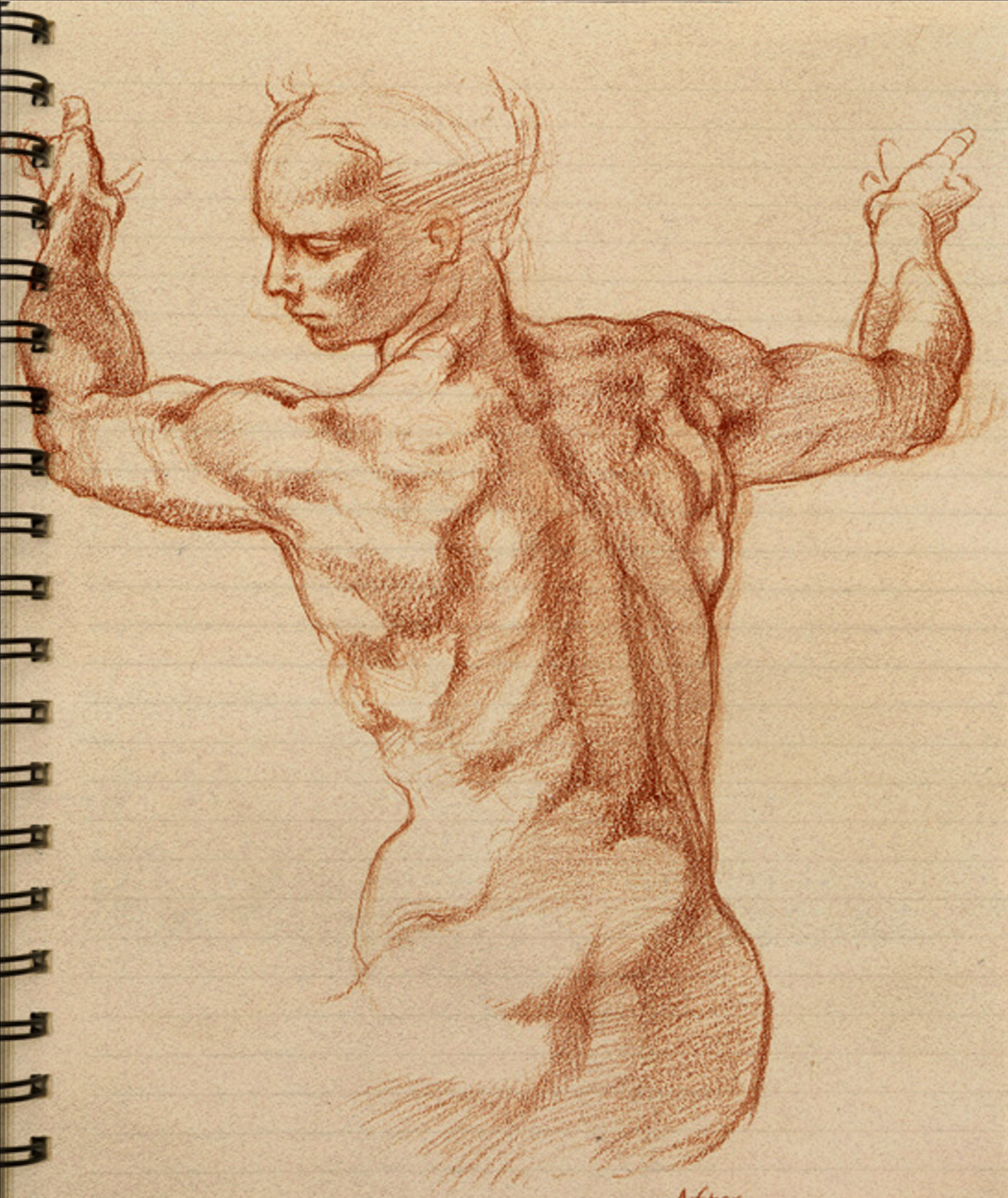
INTRODUCTION

If I'm being completely honest, I have a bit of a love/hate relationship with sketching. While I love the noncommittal approach to drawing that sketching provides, I do tend to treat it like an unappreciated girlfriend at times. Don't get me wrong, I really do enjoy sketching – just in sort of that on again, off again, dysfunctional relationship kind of way.

I've also never been the kind of artist who baby's a sketchbook. In fact, if my sketchbooks were children, I'd probably be in prison right now. I think I have three or four sketchbooks, one of which actually has art work in it... but even that's debatable! The others are just for writing down addresses or phone numbers, and I think one is now a sort of coaster/plate hybrid to put food and beverages on while I work.

Regardless, I've managed to save a few sketches over the last few years, which 2DArtist has kindly allowed me to present in this month's sketchbook feature. I hope you enjoy them! – Joel



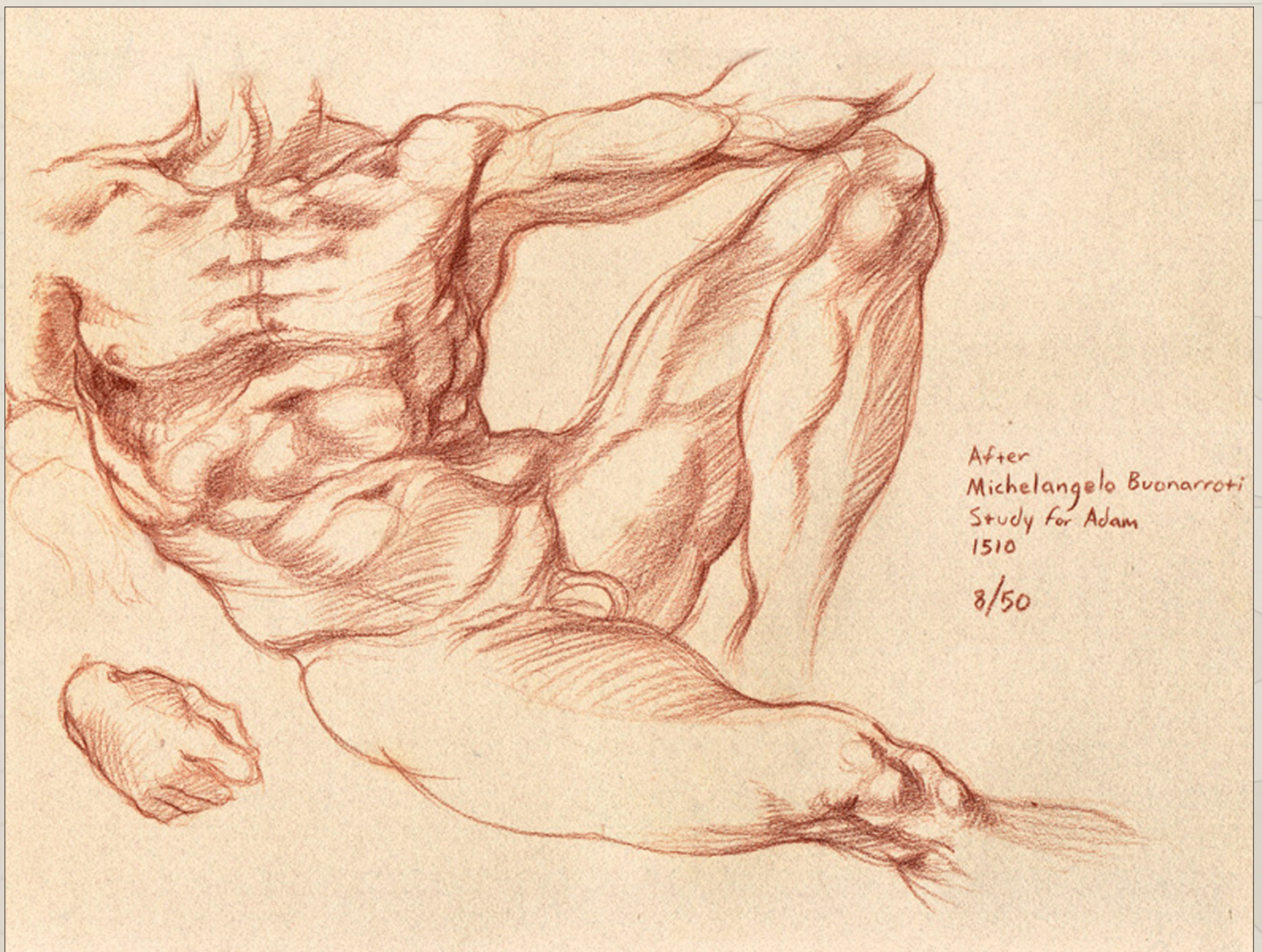


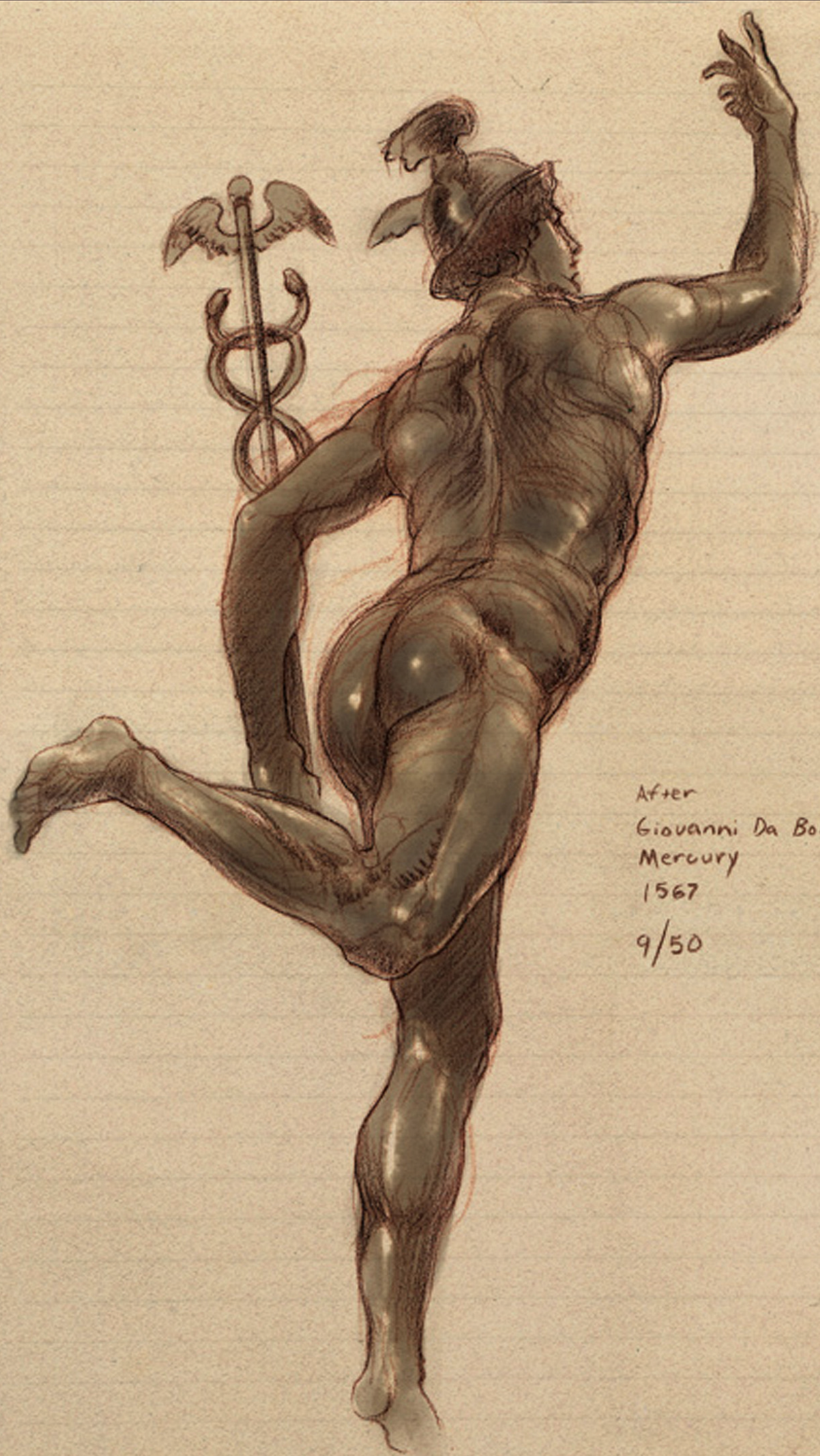
ANATOMY LESSON SERIES: THE TORSO

I did these master studies a while back, for Rebecca Kimmel's "Anatomy Lesson" series. Rebecca runs the artistic anatomy forum at CGTalk and, although I haven't been as active in the forum as I once was, it's still one of my favourite places to hang out and participate online.

After
Michelangelo Buonarroti
Study for the Libyan Sibyl
1511

4/50





After
Giovanni Da Bologna
Mercury
1567
9/50



After
Baccio Bandinelli
Laocoön
1525
14/50



After
Michelangelo Buonarroti
Victory
1532 - 34
10/50



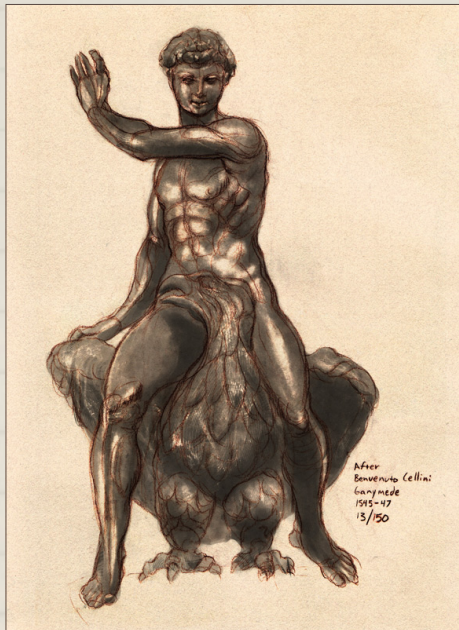
After
Michelangelo Buonarroti
Crouching Boy
1530 - 33
11/50



After
Michelangelo Buonarroti
Christ Carrying the Cross
1521
15/50



After
Micheangelo Buonarroti
Slave
1513
12/50





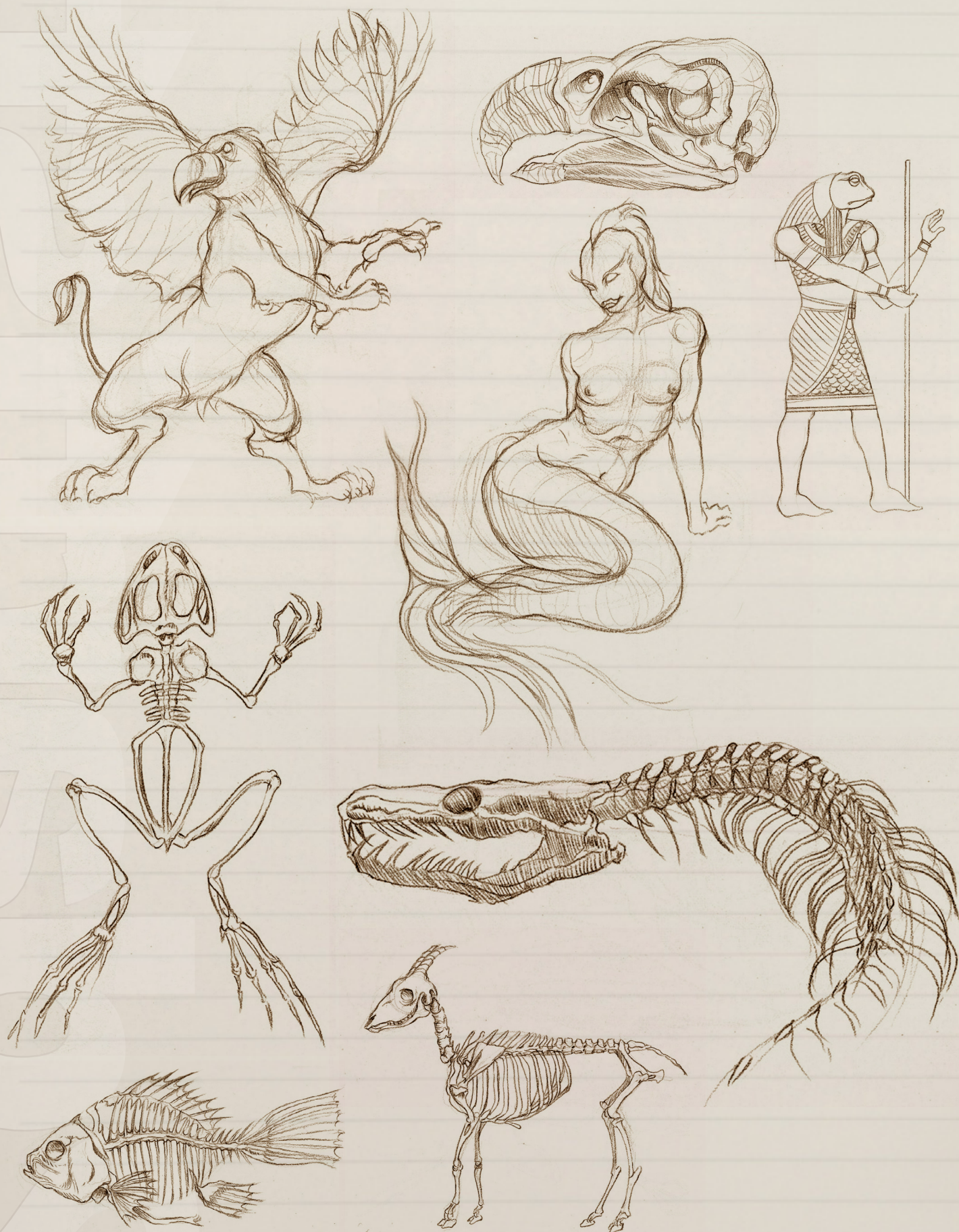
After
Caravaggio
Amor Victorious
1602-03

18/50

ANIMAL ANATOMIES

A while back I wrote an article about animal anatomies and how they have been integrated with popular creatures of myth and folklore. It was a fun project and a chance for me to sketch a subject other than my normal figurative work.





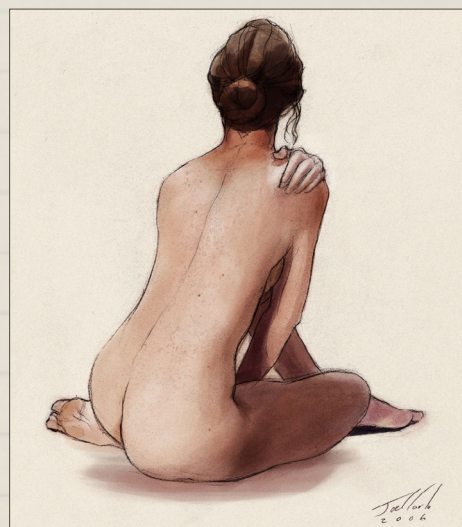
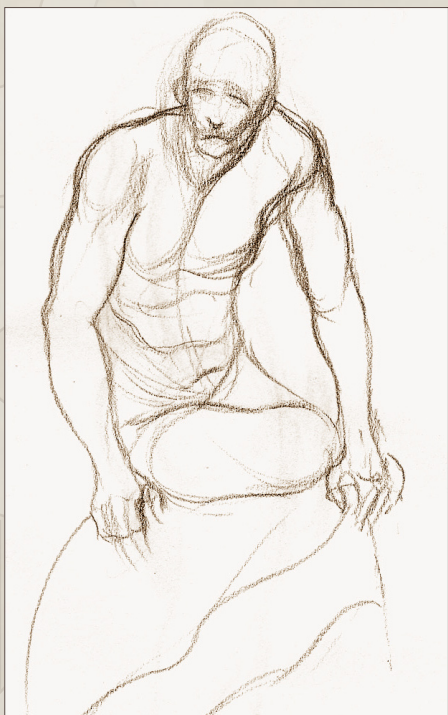
FACIAL FEATURES

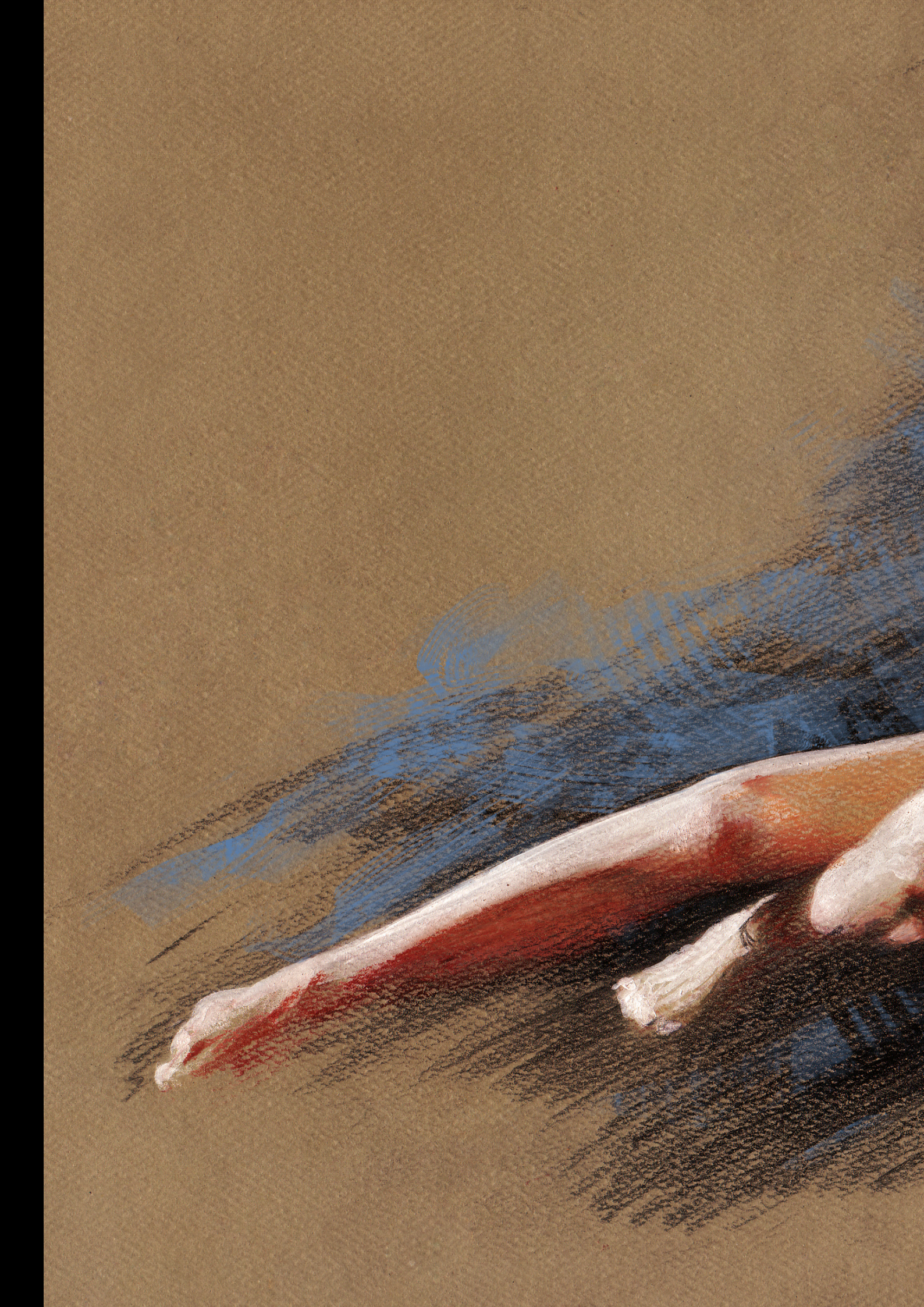
These sketches were created for an article I wrote on drawing the head and facial features.



FIGURE STUDIES

I've always been fascinated by the human body and anatomy, which is why a good portion of my sketches involve figure studies.



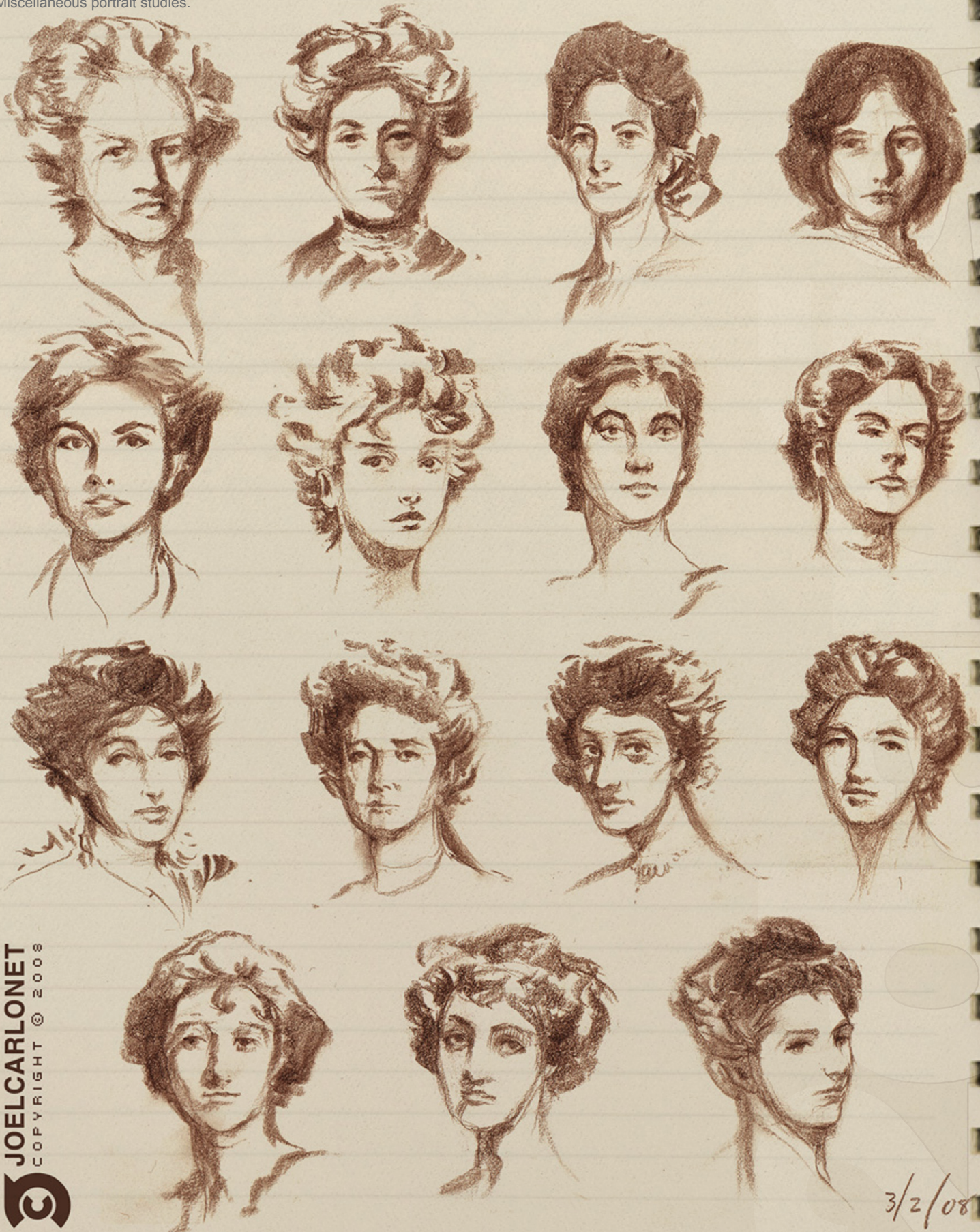






PORTRAIT STUDIES

Miscellaneous portrait studies.



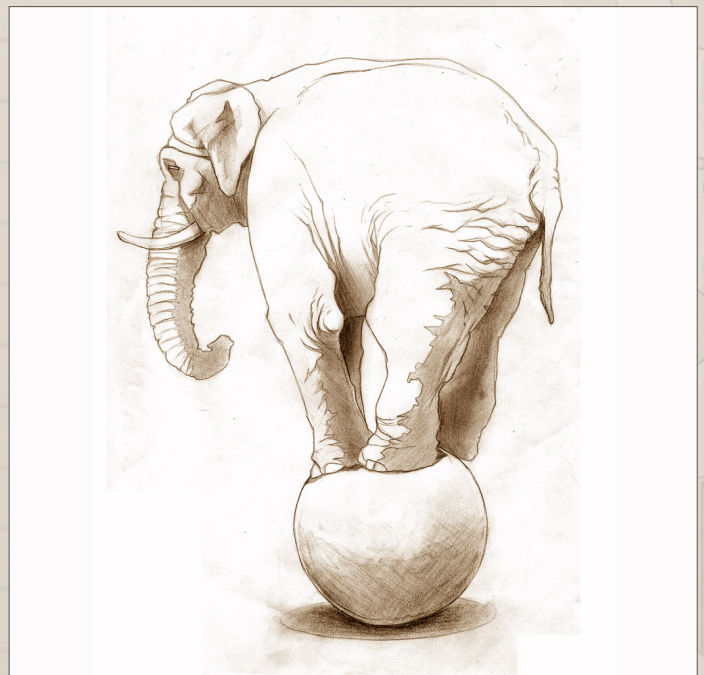


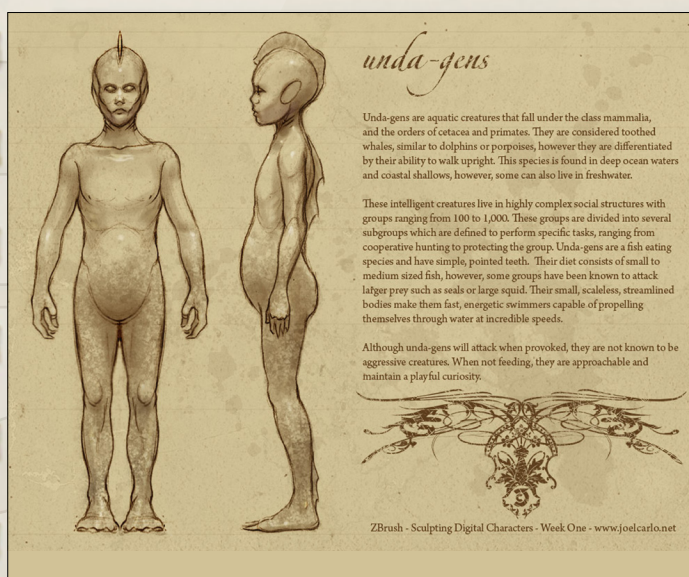
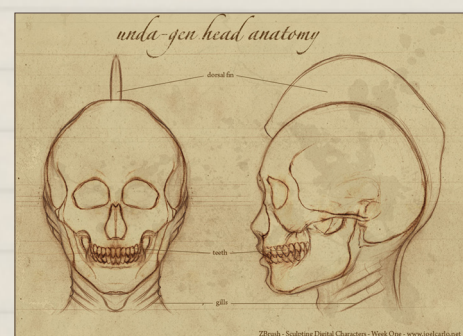
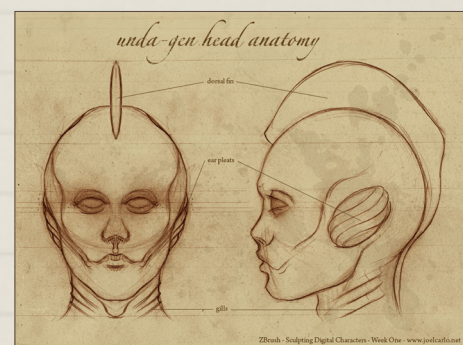
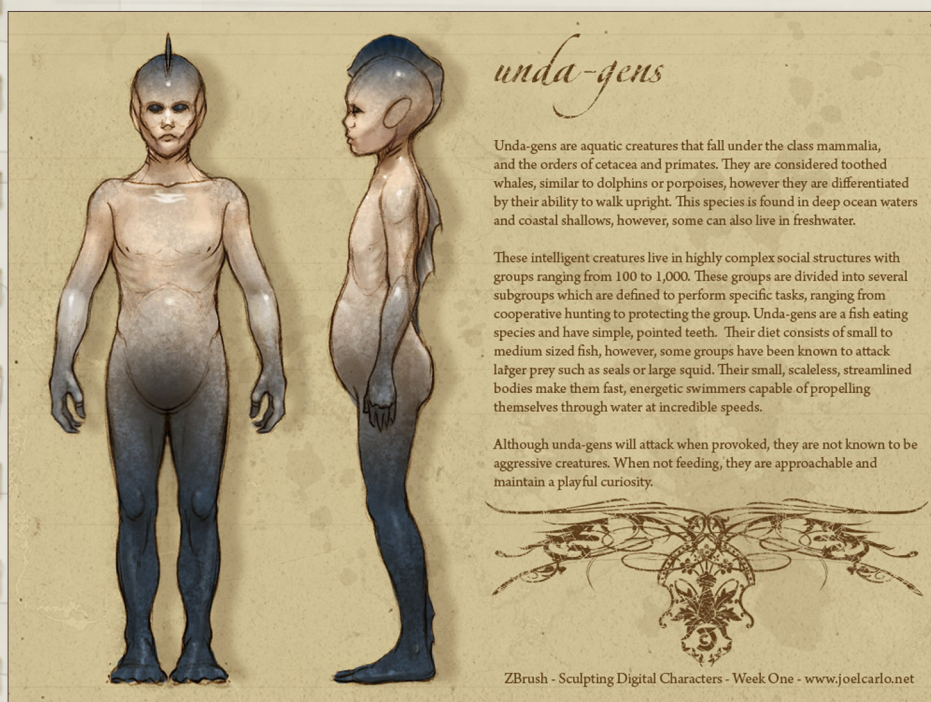
11-09-07



MISC.

Miscellaneous sketches.





SCULPTING DIGITAL CHARACTERS WITH CESAR DACOL JR

These character concepts were created for Cesar Dacol Jr.'s "Sculpting Digital Characters" workshop on CGtalk. Although I did not have the time to model out a finished 3D character, these sketches helped me out tremendously throughout the workshop. It's a perfect example of how well planned sketching can sometimes be a solid foundation for you to build your work on.

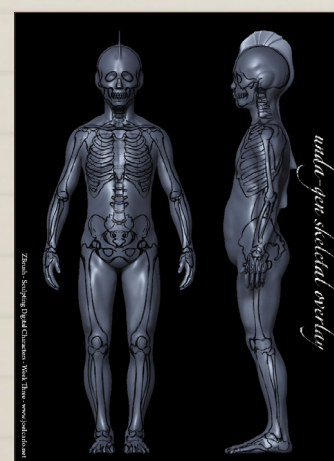
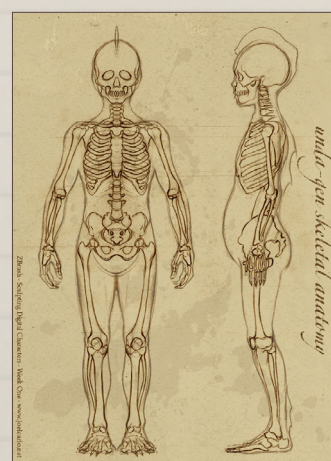
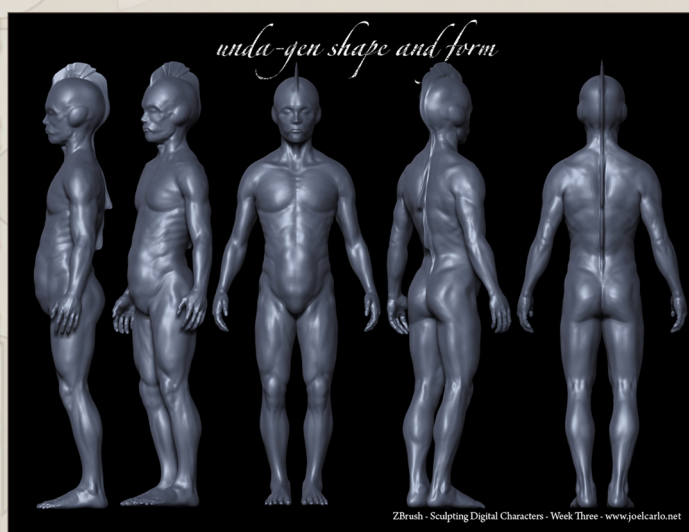
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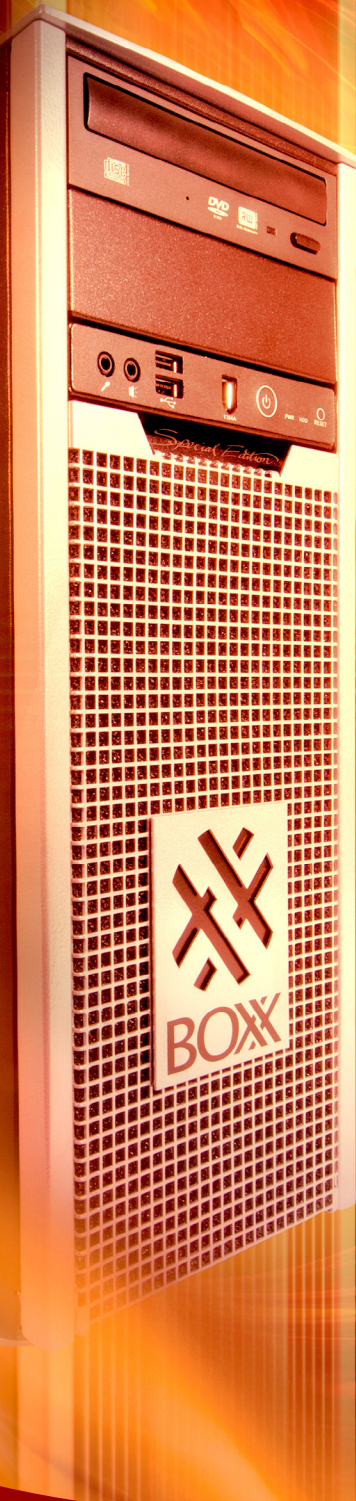
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Kerem Beyit

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Stephen Cooper

Rodny Mella

Michael Kutsche

Min Hyuk Yum

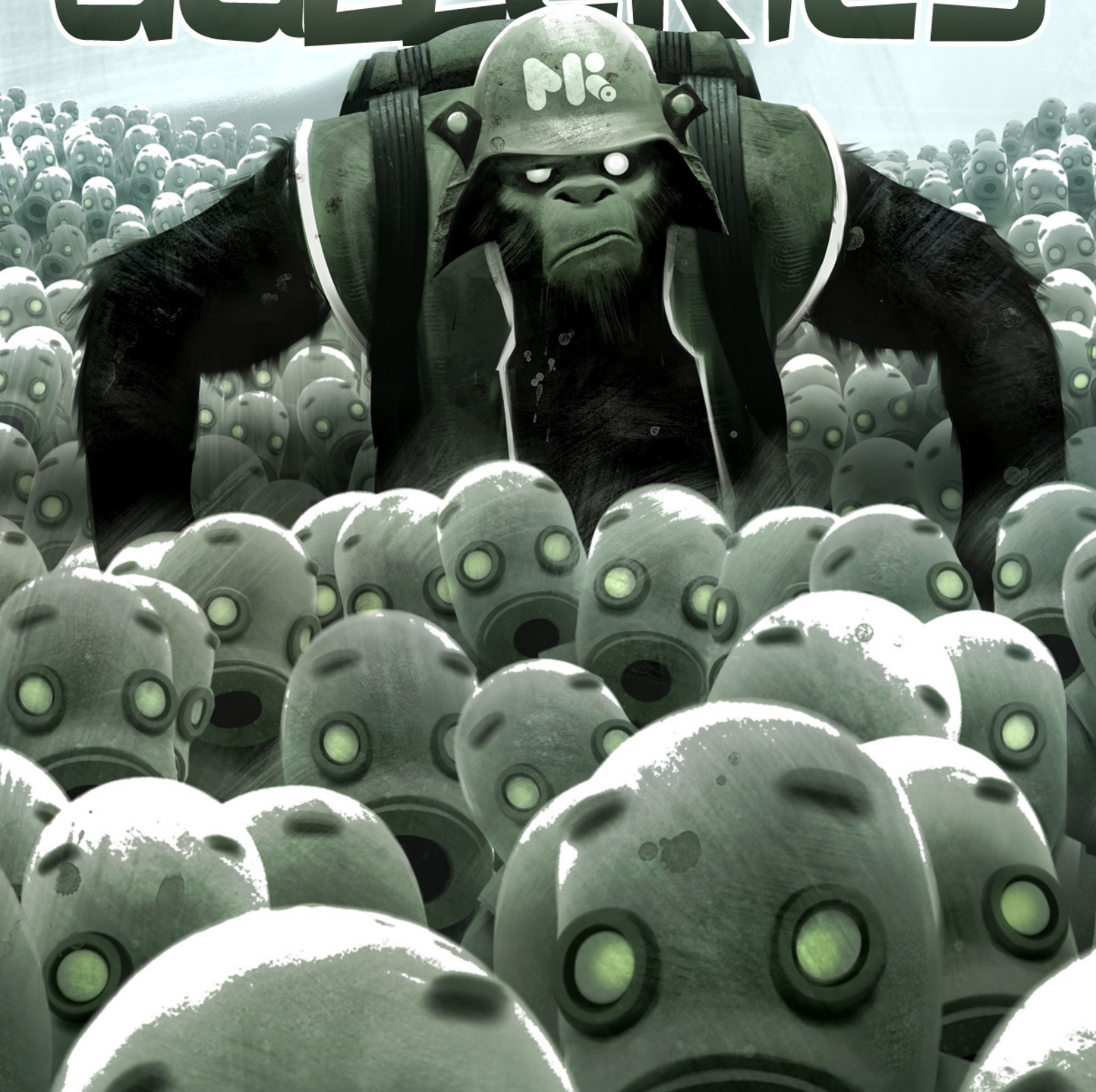
John Wallin Liberto

Levente Peterffy

Robin Olausson

Maria Trepalina

GALLERIES





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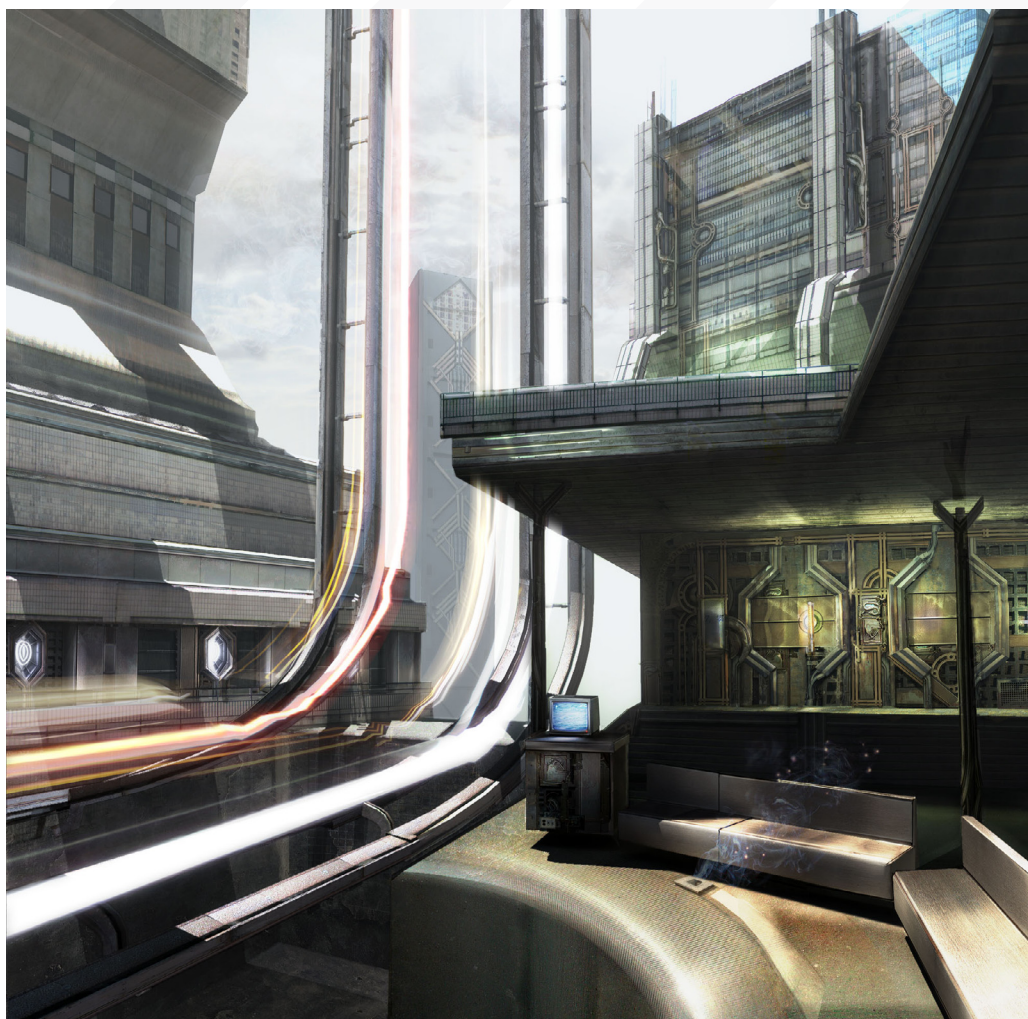
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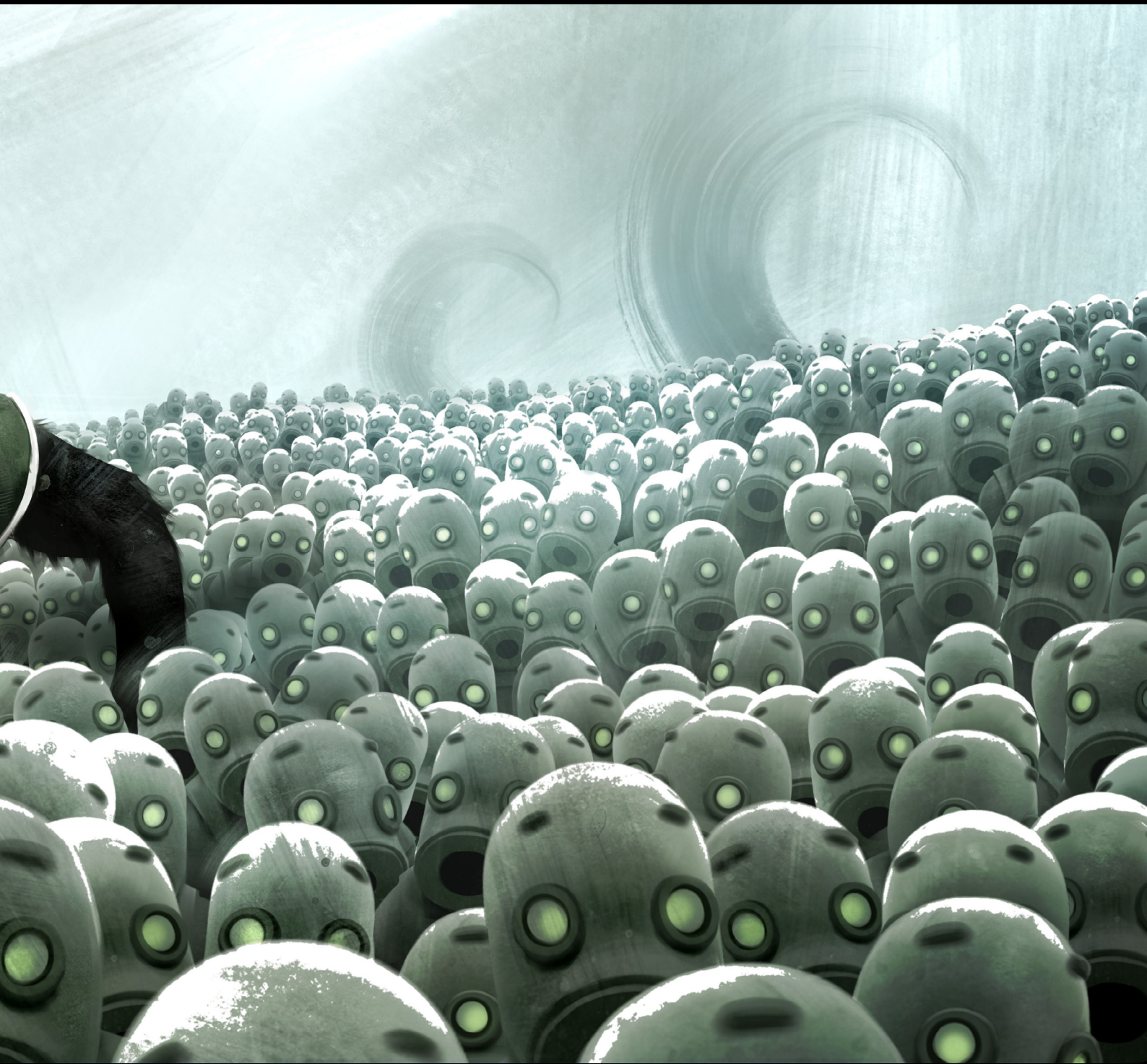
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FANART: HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC V

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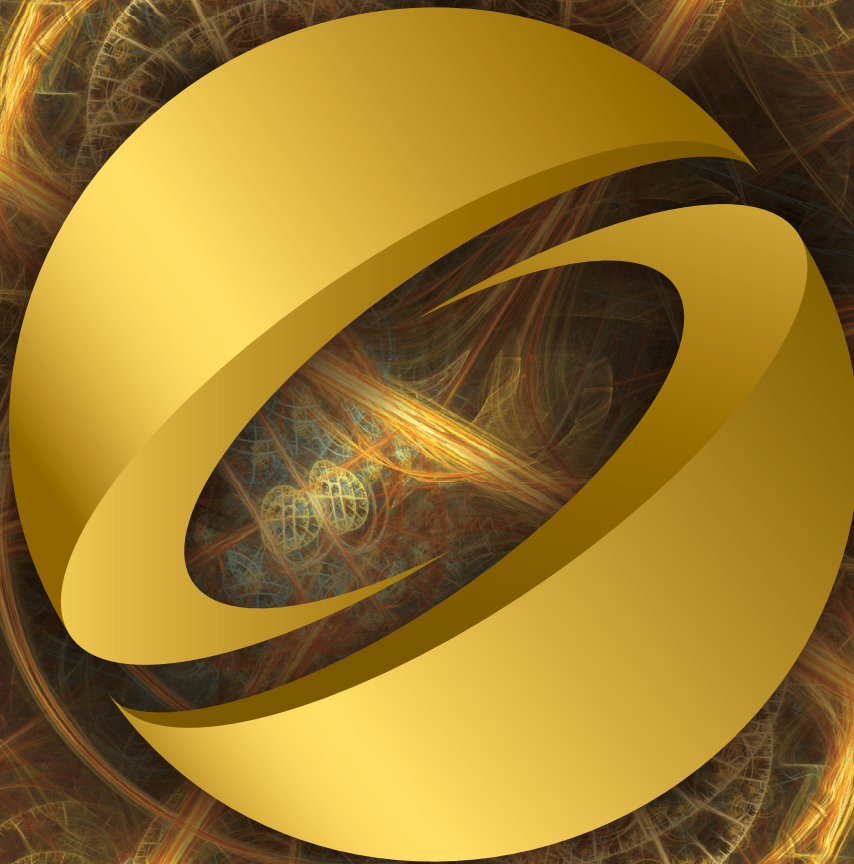
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VFS student work by Zack Mathew

the

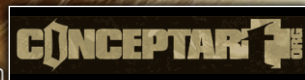
2DA challenge

2DArtist Magazine introduces the "Challenge" section of the mag. Every month we will run challenges, available for anyone to enter for prizes and goodies from the www.3dtotal.com shop and also to be featured in this very magazine! The 2D challenge runs in the ConceptArt.org forums, and the 3D challenge runs in the Threedy.com forums. Here we will display the winners from the previous month's challenge and the "Making Of's" from the month before that!

caveman

Stylised Challenge

In Association with



Stylised Challenge

CAVEMAN

THE CHALLENGE

Welcome to the Stylised Monthly Challenge. Each month we will select a subject and post some images in the forum thread as reference. All you have to do is create a 2D image of this subject in a stylised/abstract/cartoon style, whilst keeping your entry instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist Magazine on how to create stylised subjects, such as animals and characters, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images and Making Of's that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. This month's subject was "Caveman". Here you can see the top nine entries, as voted for by the public!

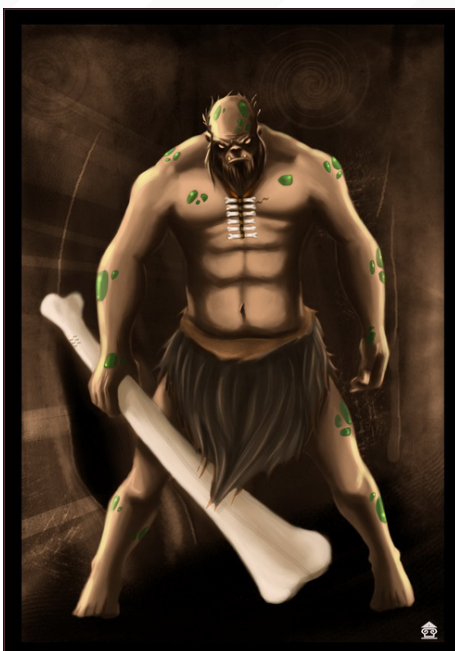
WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Funny and humorous entries that break the character down into its most recognisable components. Emphasise these in whichever ways you wish and render your stylised/abstract/cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 2D render (minor post work is OK). It's up to you if you want to have a background or if you want include some



7TH TUOVNI

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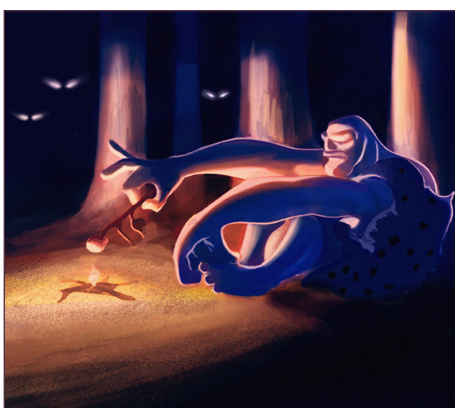


9TH ATLANTIK

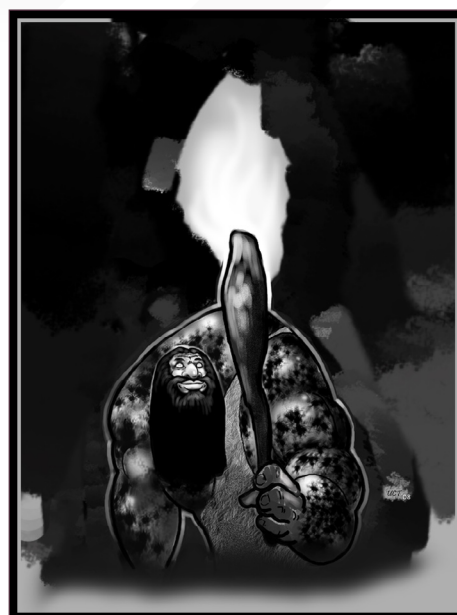
pberkovski@gmail.com



9TH BRATHER



6TH TYJOHN



9TH UCT



8TH SHATTERED FX

graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine, so if you can create some higher resolution images too, all the better!

There will be one competition per month with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top three winners to submit "Making Of" overview articles that will



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3RD LOZTVAMPIR

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be shown on either 3DTotal.com or in 2DArtist Magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation, different elements, and some brief explanation text of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content!

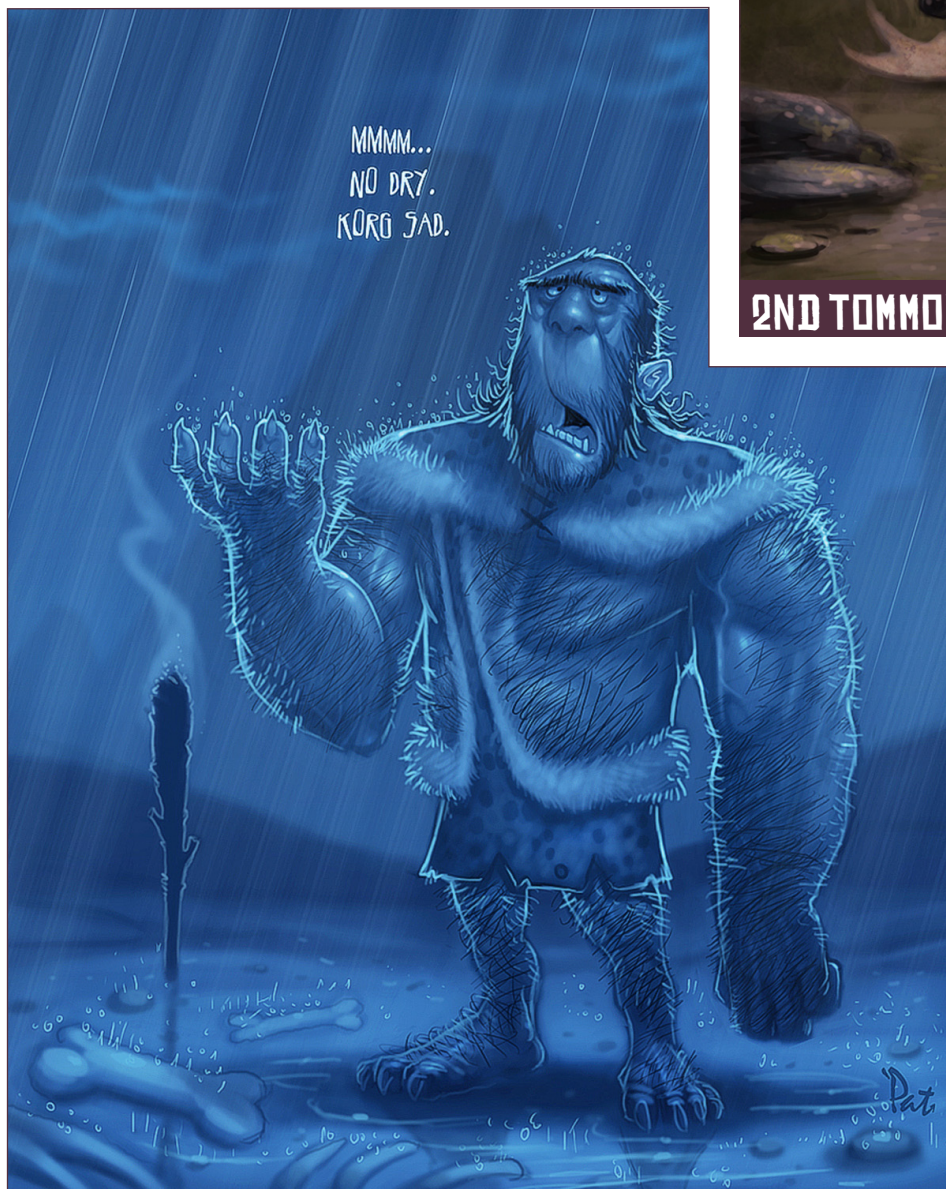
Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIPs, give feedback, and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month!

CHALLENGE THREAD

The entire **CAVEMAN** competition can be viewed here!

The current challenge at the voting stage is: **CARNIVOROUS PLANT**

The current challenge taking place is: **SPACE ROCKET**



MMMM...
NO DRY.
KORG SAD.

1ST CHUCK. MATE

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pat2003b@yahoo.com



2ND TOMMOY

info@thecartoonfactory.nl
<http://www.thecartoonfactory.nl>

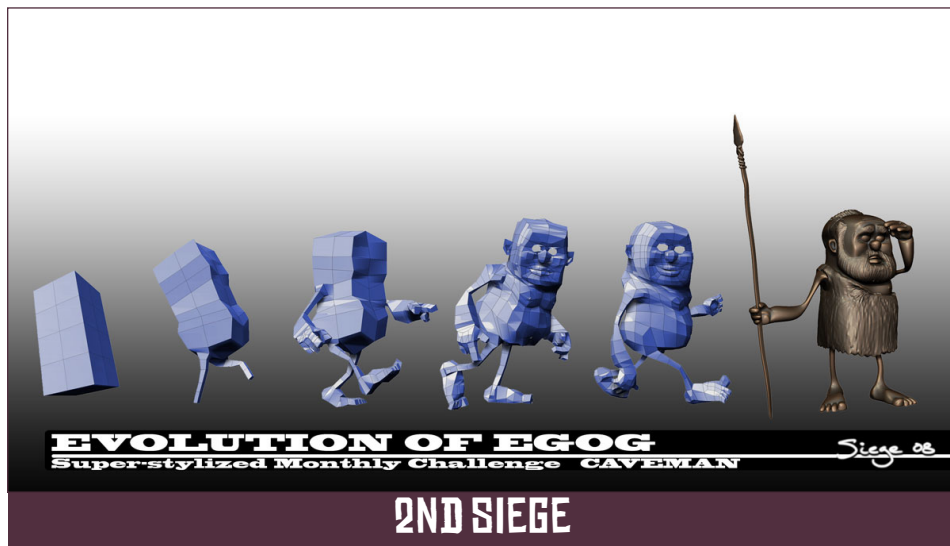
To join the next challenge, or to view previous and/or current entries, please visit:

www.conceptart.org

Or contact: lynette@zoopublishing.com

3D CHALLENGE

Here are last month's top entries from the 3D competition:





MAKING OF'S

Here are the "Making Of" from last month's top three winning entries...

3RD TOMMOY

STEP 1

This was the first time I joined in on the Super Stylised Challenge in the ConceptArt.



Fig.01

org forums. I started with the idea of making a serious, traditional executioner using the references provided in the challenge thread. It was important to me for the axe to be big and ready for the job! Accordingly, the Executioner

also needed to be strong (especially his arms) in order to swing the axe; a slightly relaxed pose should give him an extra "I'm ready for it!" mood. The huge arms resting on the axe and the back of the figure form a well balanced triangle in the centre, guiding the eye to the focal points: the figure's head primarily and the axe blade secondary. The hunch gives him a kind of medieval accent, and the large belly is a nice counterweight for that. I hesitated about the cap as I wondered whether it should cover all of his head or just half of it. I decided to go for the last option so I could give him some expression on the face and, of course, a little scar (Fig.01).

STEP 2

I started to block in the shapes, first of all in grey tones, then in colour. I decided it would be a dark scene lit only by the moon for some dramatic lighting effects (Fig.02). This came out very bluish, so I added the fire as an extra light source for a nice contrast. For the fireplace I used a photograph, of which I enlarged the medieval sphere. Further detailing of the shapes was given, and I then decided I needed a wooden floor. For this, I used a photograph



Fig.02

which I transformed on a Multiply layer so that it would fit the perspective from the bottom. For the moon and wood block, I also used textures. I blurred the parts outside of the focal points to let them protrude more. Finally, I decided to give a little red light to his eyes for contrast (Fig.03).

TOM VAN WANROOY

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.thecartoonfactory.nl>

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Fig.03

2ND DAVENEALE

Well, another month, another stylised challenge – it's become a regular monthly exercise that I really enjoy, and this month was a nice fun change from animals, which I'm more comfortable with, to a human character.

I started out in my sketchbook with the main aim of having an interesting face for the guy. I seem to gravitate towards characters with long, drawn-out faces and this one fits the bill for a character I really enjoy doing. I scanned the initial drawing in and added the lower part of his body in Photoshop. The pose is very reminiscent of Sam Flores' work – I love his stuff (**Fig.01**).

So I whacked the sketch layer over everything and set it to Multiply so I always had my lines to refer too, and just slapped some colour down with the aim of getting the general lighting right. Things always go through a lot of changes when I work like this; it's just good to have some frame of reference colour-wise in the beginning (**Fig.02**).

It's something I'm trying hard to do more and this piece was good practice. I started to slap down large forms and get the overall light/darks in order to try and get a cohesive feel for the whole image, rather than concentrate on little areas at a time. It's tempting to start adding details early, but the more I read tutorials, the more I hear that it's more important to cycle all around the image and do things all together, rather than concentrate on sections (**Fig.03**).

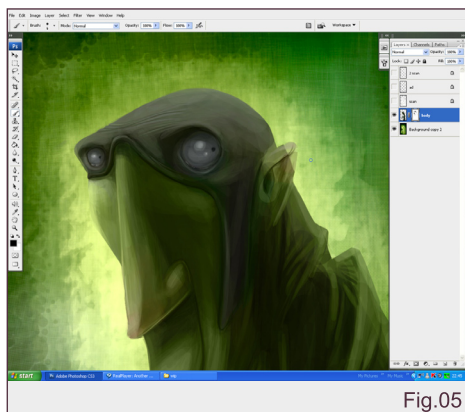


Fig.05



Fig.01



Fig.02



Fig.03

I continued to refine forms, and you can see that I've flipped the canvas here, too – something that I do a lot to get a fresh perspective on the image! (**Fig.04**)



Fig.04

I then started to add some detail to the head, as well as adding some other colours so as not to just have a crazy green image. I added the colour with a new layer set to "Color", which lets

you add different hues without messing with your values (**Fig.05**).

I decided that the bright green was a little too over-the-top and so toned it down. I was also playing a lot with the light/darkness, trying to get the right balance... I usually do these using Image > Adjustments > Levels (**Fig.06**).

Again, playing with the light, I upped the saturation and strength of the light by his head to get a little more contrast in the image, and I knew that the head was definitely where I wanted the focus of the picture (**Fig.07**).



Fig.06



Fig.07



Fig.08

I then made the choice to jump right in with colour: I added some fleshy tones and purpled-up his top/mask. I was careful to keep some of my greens in there, to keep the character and the background sitting in the same place rather than it looking like a background with another character sitting on top (**Fig.08**).

Finally, I darkened everything up. I wanted a lot more contrast between the light/dark areas, and I also changed the paint strokes in the background to give a more painterly feel, as I felt the strokes before were a little harsh.

And "biggiddy-bam", all done! As ever, I learnt a lot from this; recently I've been trying to keep my layer count to a minimum and, especially with a more painterly piece like this, I find it really helps. I still have a lot to learn but it's all part of the process, I guess. Cheerio!

DAVE NEALE

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.daveneale.co.uk>

Or contact them at:

davejneale@hotmail.com



1ST CHUCK.MATE

STEP 1

I started with a sketch, searching for a good stylised character design, something that'd say "executioner" to me. I drew him fat and bulky, striking a pose with his weapon of execution – a big axe – with a look on his face that says "Look ... this is my day job, alright? At home, with the missus, I'm actually cute and cuddly, like a big teddy-bear..." I kept his outfit simple and effective, and I placed him at the bottom of my frame, leaving some "breathing" space to the right, in the direction my main figure is facing (Fig.01).

STEP 2

Under my sketch work layer, on a new layer set to "Multiply", I filled in the entire image with a dark green and painted in some scattered reds and oranges, too. That made for a good underpainting, and set the colour scheme and mood for the piece throughout its making.

On a new "Normal" mode layer I then started painting in my general mid-tone for the executioner's body and face, using a brown-orange colour. I also filled in with a solid – really dark – brown for the leather hood, boots

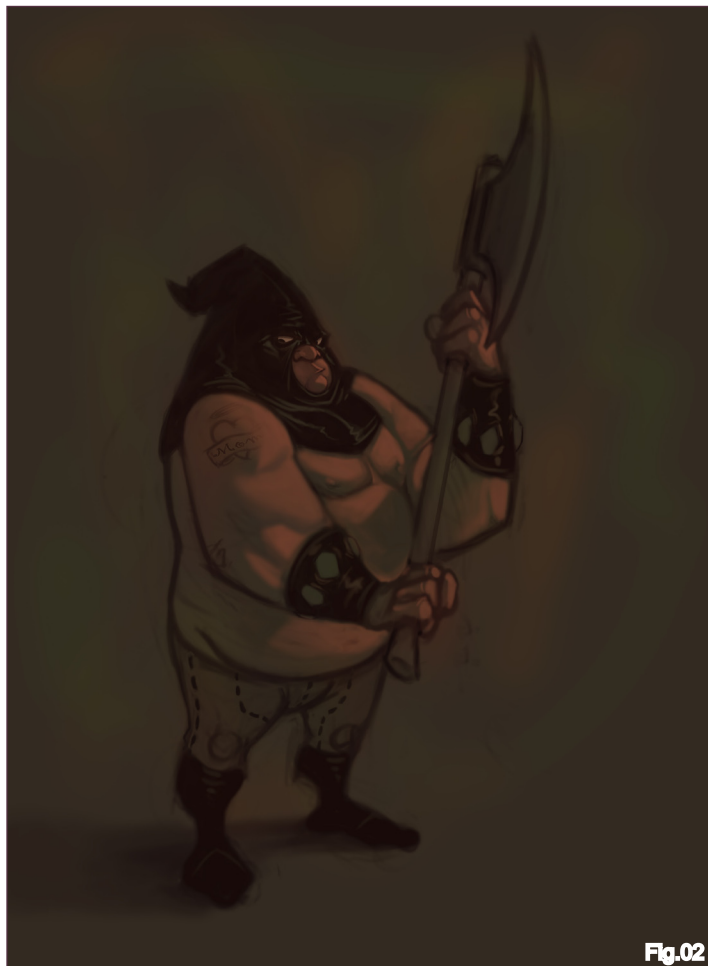


Fig.02



Fig.01

and wrist bands. My initial underpainting was left "peeking" to create the cast shadow areas and the parts of the shape and form where light won't reach.

This stage defined my light source direction and intensity (Fig.02).

STEP 3

I merged all my layers and started painting on top of the preliminary work. I used lighter oranges and yellows to further define the muscle structure and shapes for my figure. I applied a dark brown colour for the pants and I further painted in the hands and face, adding more detail. I then used lighter versions of the background colour to paint in the axe head, to imply its material (metal, reflecting the surroundings, rather than having a colour of its own). Finally, I added some wear and tear to the axe as well (Fig.03).

STEP 4

At this point I increased my image contrast and I painted in a lighter colour around the character to separate it a bit more from the background. With the same colour I further defined the light cast on the ground around the executioner's feet. Doing the opposite thing around the axe (using a

darker colour to further emphasise the lighter tones in the weapon) made it “pop” out a bit more, as well. I filled in a new layer set to “Color” with a red-purple colour, and I lowered the layer opacity to 8-9. This “gathered” all my colours so far and made for a more “together” colour scheme (Fig.04).

STEP 5 - FINAL

Finally, I added more detail to the face (a bluish grey for the 5-o'clock shadow etc.), the hands and elbows (painting some reds into it), the axe's wooden handle, and the pants (more refined patterns and details).

I also added some bloody trails on the ground, suggesting more of this guy's occupation and on a new layer set to “Overlay”, I used white to

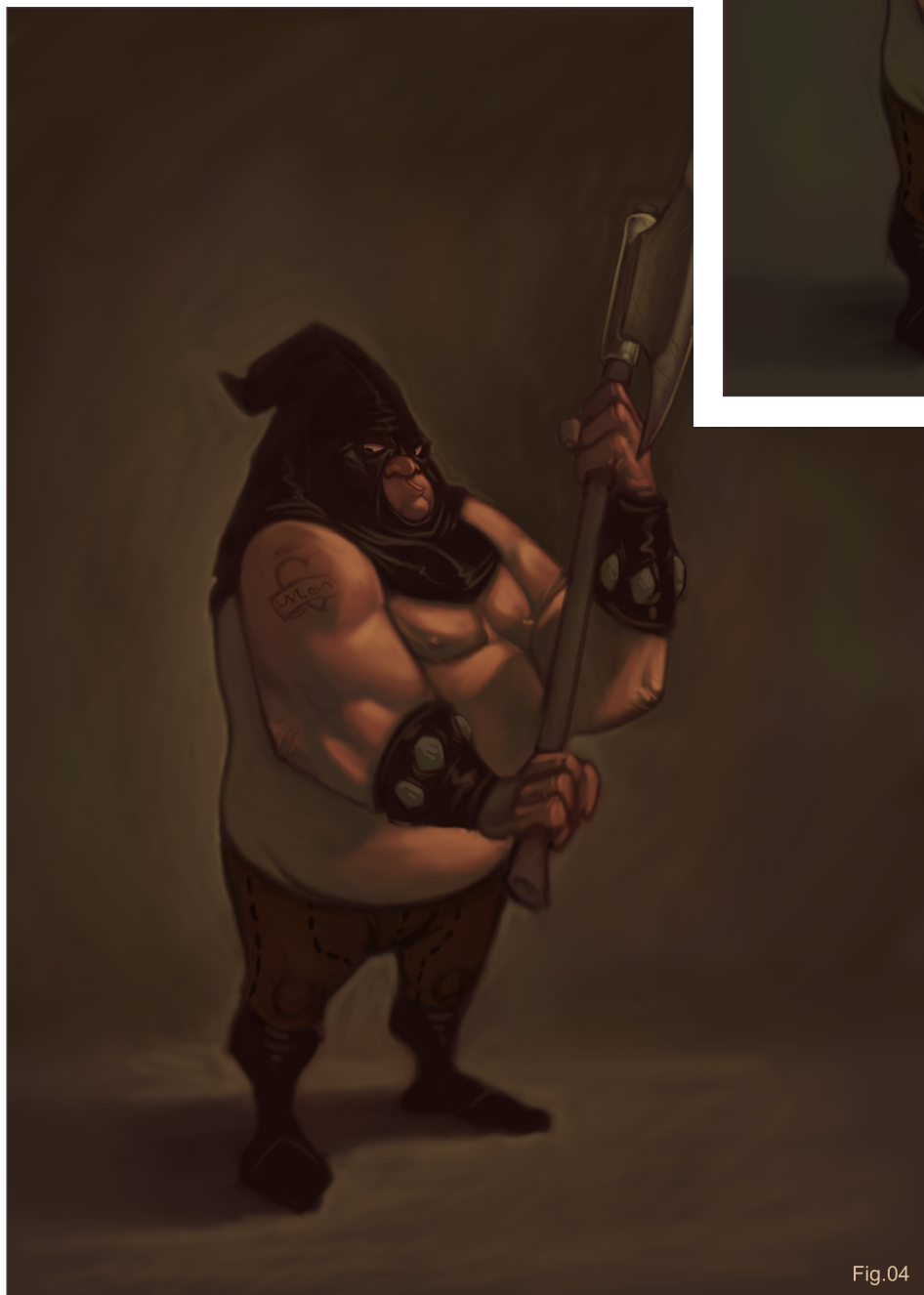


Fig.04

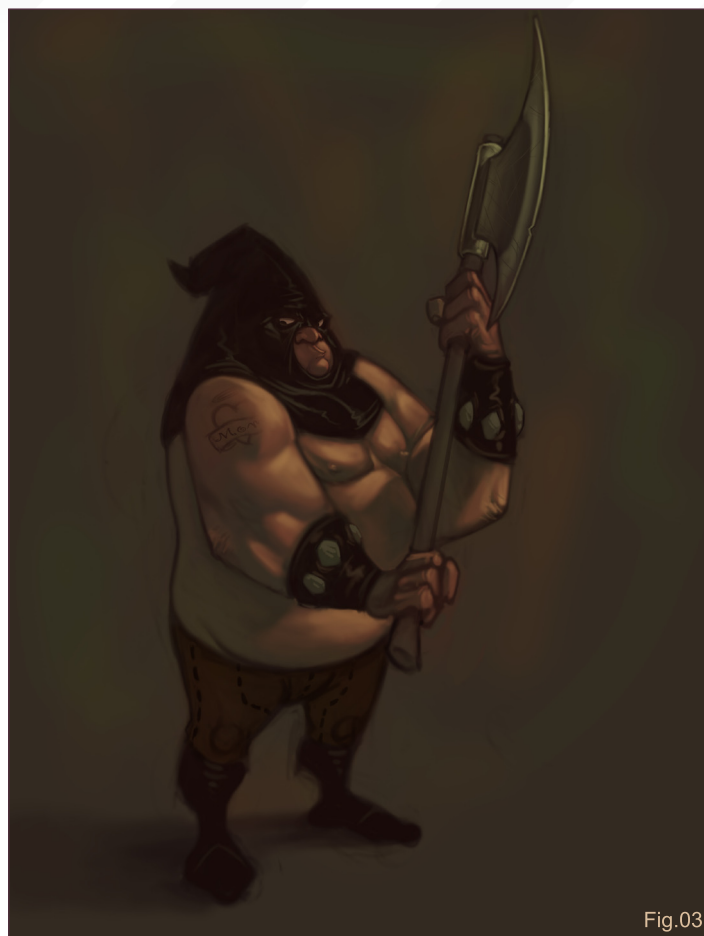


Fig.03

brighten the parts where light hit the most, both on my figure and on the ground. I also painted the background with more refined brushwork, introducing some warm colours to the cold initial underpainting in order to make all the elements in my image “speak” with each other a little better.

Finally, I painted the “Mom” tattoo onto the guy's arm as a finishing touch (Fig.05).

And that, in a nutshell, was the whole deal!

PATRI BALANOVSKY

For more work by this artist please visit:

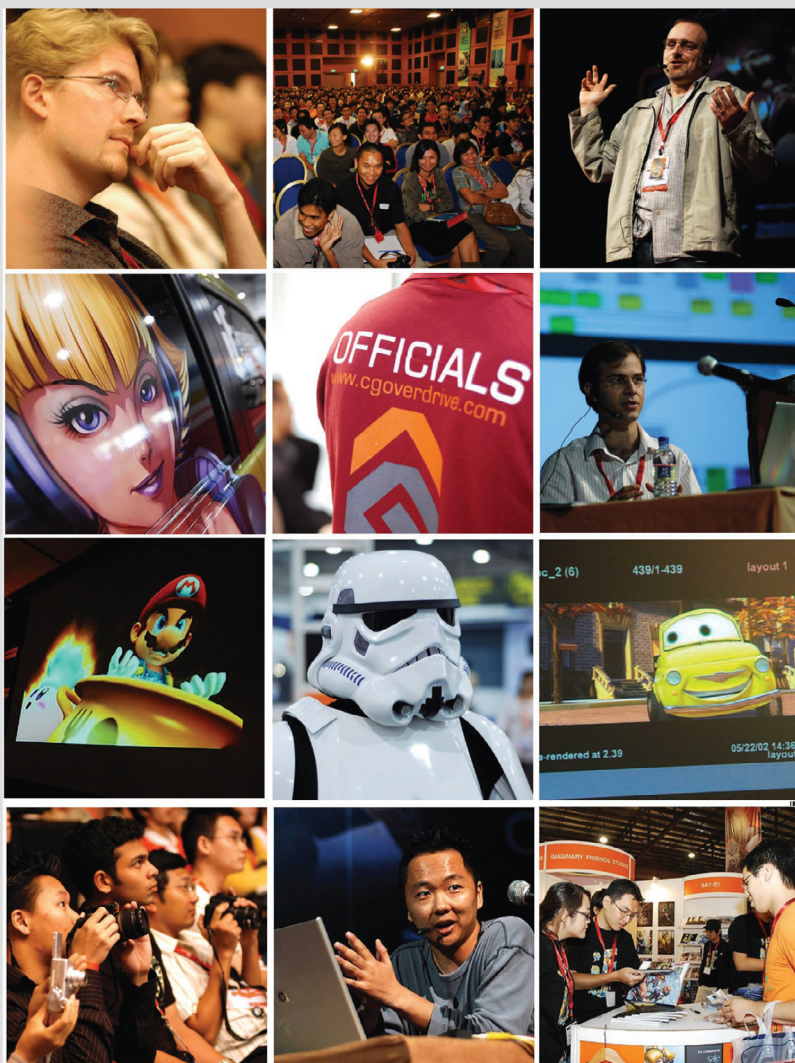
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Intro Text

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. We've asked two artists this month to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes.

This month our talented artists, Nick Oroc and Marc Brunet, tackle the topic:

**IT WAS A LONG WAY UP
BUT THEY HAD
NO CHOICE BUT TO
CONTINUE CLIMBING**

NICK OROC

CREATED IN:

Photoshop

The idea behind this subject matter came to me while I was reminiscing about my childhood in the Mediterranean. I remember playing with a type of vegetation on which some kind of fragile cherry grew. These delicate cherries would explode with a mere touch and splatter me with whatever liquid they contained. Luckily for me they weren't poisonous.

My main thoughts behind this speed painting consisted of: exploding cherry, teamwork, altitude, and especially humour. I wanted to create a team effort of two venturers climbing

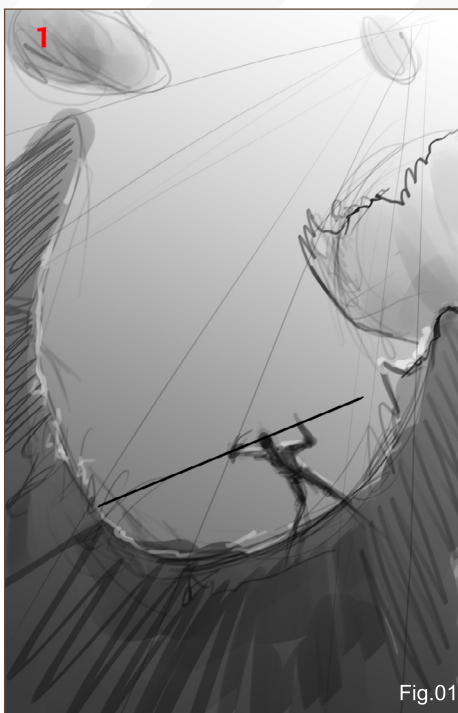


Fig.01

from one vegetation platform to another using nothing but rope, a spear and exploding cherries. I also wanted to create a directional focal point depicting the height they had to scale to get from one platform to another.

In **Fig.01**, I roughed out a composition. I personally don't like working on a white canvas so a simple grey tone gradient solved that problem. Doing so also helps me gauge my

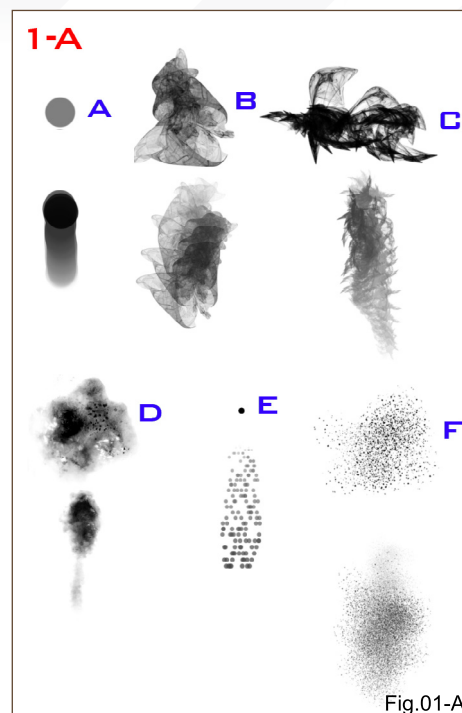


Fig.01-A

values. Using a freehand perspective guide, I blocked in some silhouetted shapes. This is the stage where I don't think about detail, only composition. It's fast and easy and can be done in a matter of a minutes.

Fig.01-A displays the six brushes I used to create this painting. Brush A is a standard hard edge, round brush and the rest are part of my collection of custom brushes that I've created over the years. As you can see I selected a small range of organic looking brushes that appealed to me and I knew would allow me to render out my scene very quickly. Creating the brush settings is a very personal thing. What's important to keep in mind is simply to experiment and save the brushes. Create a folder with a library of these brushes for easy access and just load them up in Photoshop depending on the subject matter you will paint.



Fig.02



Fig.03

When I'm unsure of a colour palette, I start off with a value painting. It's a safe and quick approach that allows me to knock out an image but not worry too much about colour. **Fig.02** illustrates this step. This stage took me about 40 minutes to produce. With my base sketch underneath and composition set, all I had to

SPEED PAINTING

It was a long way up but they had no choice but to continue climbing

2d
Artist

worry about were four things: textures created by my custom brushes, character posing, depth, and mood lighting.

Once I was content with the value painting, it was time to add colour. I try to keep my layers very minimal to maximize desktop speed and also to not get lost in lots of different layers. I created a new layer over my value painting and just started painting some colours using

some texture brushes. (Fig.03). Notice how the colours are darker and warmer on the bottom left, and brighten and get cooler as I worked my way up to the top right. My reason for doing this was to simply create more contrast between the foreground and the background (warm vs cool). I then set the painted texture in overlay mode (Fig.04). This then tinted my background without losing too much detail in my value painting. The only problem I have with using the layer overlay



Fig.05




Fig.04



Fig.06

mode is that the colours get pretty dull and washed out. But it's a good base to start with. Fig.05 was the stage where I started to bring back to life those colours that had become very dull by simply colour picking them, increasing the saturation, and glazing lightly over the coloured areas to liven them up.

Fig.06 is the final stage where I started to add some particle effects, finishing details, and I sharpened up the image.



I hope you enjoyed this tutorial as much as did creating it. Always make sure that you have fun with every piece that you create and make lots of happy mistakes. Keep things simple without deviating too far from your main goal - illustrating an idea.

NICK OROC

For more from this artist visit:

www.nickorocart.com

Or contact:

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NOROC '08

MARC BRUNET

CREATED IN:

Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

As artists, one question we often get is: "Where do you get ideas for your pieces?". Normally I always have something in mind when I start a piece and that idea itself it triggered, most of the time, by something I will see browsing the Internet as I think it is one of the best sources for inspiration. But when it comes to speed painting, things are not quite the same. At the very start of the process, I will skip a key step which is "building and defining my idea". I think that is what makes speed painting really interesting; you just go and start, having absolutely no clue where you're going.

SHAPING THINGS UP

Having no idea what to do normally forces me into painting very abstract shapes as a start. I then build upon those shapes and ideas will start to flow. In this particular case, I know at least two things; I want to have a sky in there somewhere and I want to draw rocks. Call those self imposed guidelines or whatever, I'm just feeling that way today I guess. After only a couple of brush strokes, I normally start to get a clearer idea of where this is all going and this painting was no exception: it became clear very quickly that the subject would be a mountain of some sort. The theme being "It was a long way up but they had no choice but to continue

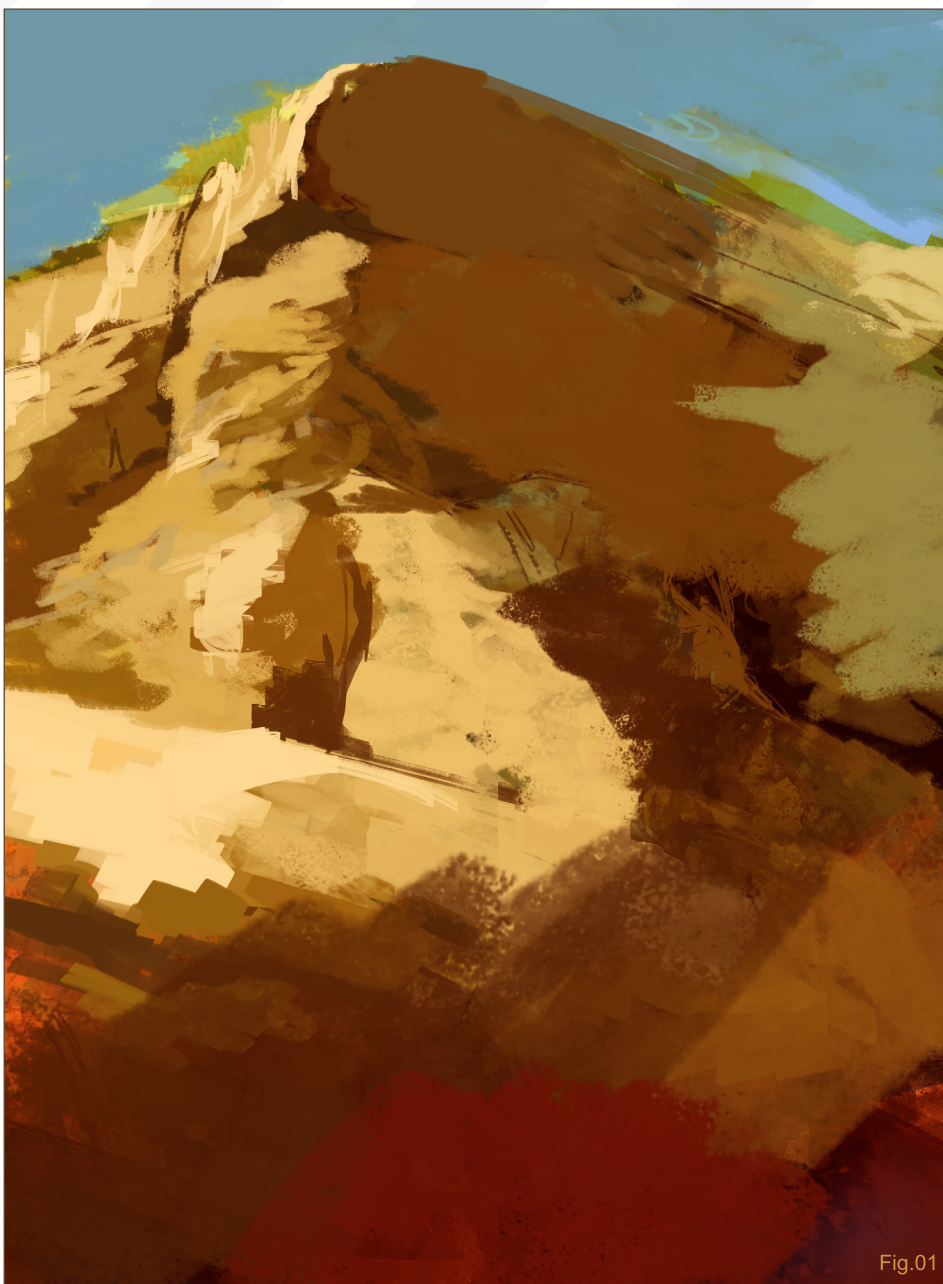


Fig.01

climbing", I am now kind of going in the direction I told myself I would not. I wanted to come up with something a little out of the ordinary, so that when people look at it they would tell themselves "Well I wouldn't have thought about something like that!". I'll have to do something about that! (Fig.01)

THEN THERE WAS LIGHT!

Light is always a very important part of any painting I do. It helps set the mood of the piece, determine the time of the day, the temperature but is also a double edged sword: if you screw it up, the whole piece will end up looking like

an ugly butt. At this point in a speed painting, you just live with what you have so far and try to make it look like something interesting. So far two things are already decided: the light is coming from the left and it's a very sunny day. Painting lights is always a challenge for the brain; you have to put yourself in the sun's point of view and try to imagine what you see and what you do not. Things you see will obviously be lit, while the rest will be in the shadows. Because I feel my composition is a little boring, I'll use light to improve it and bring the viewer's eyes to wherever I want in the image. It's like subtle mind control. Genius? Yes. (Fig.02)

THE PALETTE

Just as lighting the scene is crucial, the colour palette is even more so. In this case, like in most, the colours take their importance when the lights are set. Only then you can tell from which direction the backlights are coming from, how the ambient light is affecting the colours and so on. In this painting I have a very bright sun hitting the left of the cliff, so I want to have some colours on the other side to make sure I do not have too big of a bright/dark contrast going on. This is all considering the fact that the cliff is not really the focal point of the image. With the two characters I'm planning to add, I really don't want anything else to steal the show. Best solution in this case is to boost the refraction from the sky on the rocks. If you think about it, those rocks in the shadows are still being lit by the subtle blue light coming from the sky. (Fig.03)

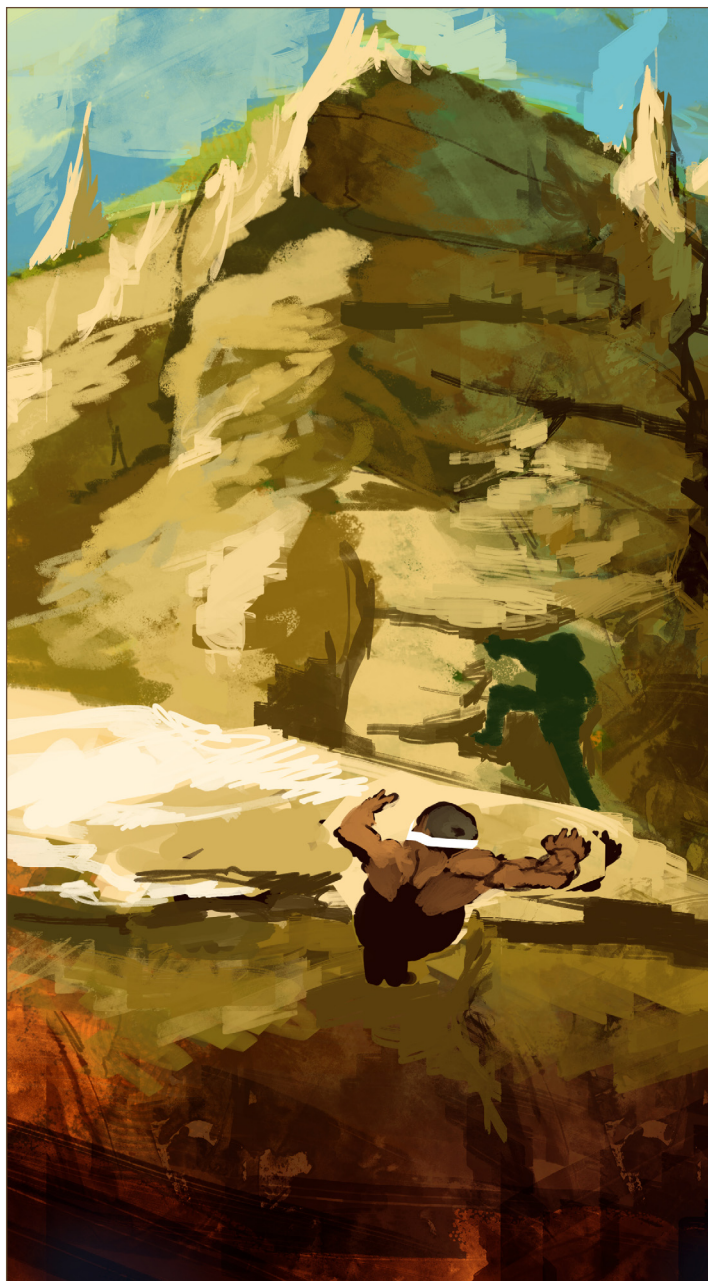


Fig.03

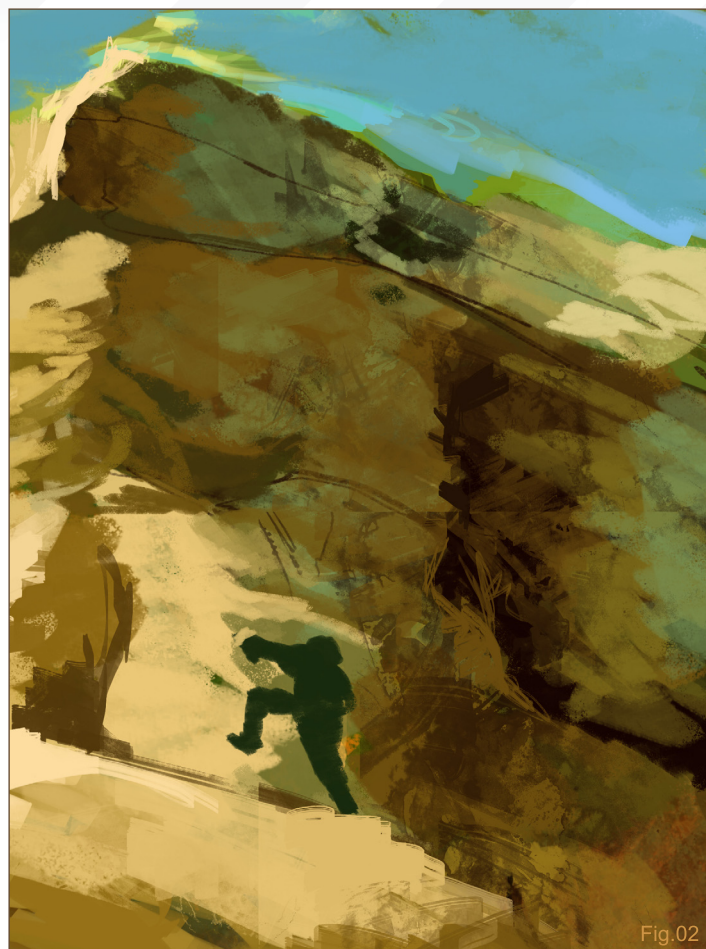


Fig.02

COMPOSITION

I like what the composition looks like so far, but I'm starting to think I might have a problem when the characters are done. I want them to be the focal point of the image, but I'm thinking at the same time that I really want to give the image the feeling they still have a long way to go - emphasise the height of the mountain. Normally any characters I was planning to put in should have been blocked in already at this point, to avoid such composition tweaking this far into the process. (Fig.04)

With the little men finally thrown in there, I'm able to see my options better. All I had to add to fix the composition were a few simple huts with a really punchy red, leading the eyes all the way to the top. (Fig.05)



Fig.04

CONCLUSION

All that is left now is about 30 minutes of tweaking and polishing to make it look a little more decent. For the entire piece, I used four custom brushes, no textures or anything else. I like to be able to paint everything myself, but at the same time, it helps to develop speed without relying on your custom brush sets too much. I also used a single layer for everything, which helps to give it that "painted" look (Fig.05).

About halfway into the process, I came up with the idea that something dangerous was chasing them from the bottom, which is why they were climbing. It was only at the end that I fixed in my mind what these creatures were: lava monsters, coming out of an overflowing lava river surrounding the mountain. Being distracted, those two unlucky folks got stuck in a bad situation, trying to escape to save their lives.

Now you'll ask me: "Why is the one in yellow not helping his friend?" I'll tell you why - he's not his friend, alright?!

MARC BRUNET

For more from this artist visit:

<http://bluefley.cgsociety.org>

Or contact:

finalxii@msn.com



ELEMENTS

DIGITAL PAINTING DOWNLOADABLE TUTORIAL SERIES

INTRODUCTION:

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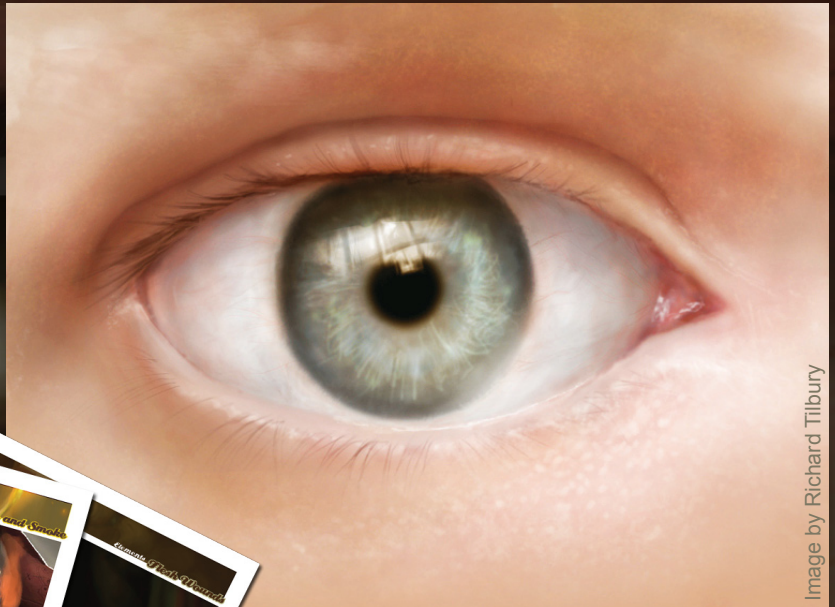


Image by Richard Tilbury



VOLUME 1:

- Chapter 1: Painting Eyes
- Chapter 2: Painting Fabric
- Chapter 3: Painting Fire & Smoke
- Chapter 4: Painting Flesh Wounds
- Chapter 5: Painting Fur & Hair

VOLUME 2:

- Chapter 1: Painting Rock & Stone
- Chapter 2: Painting Sky
- Chapter 3: Painting Skin
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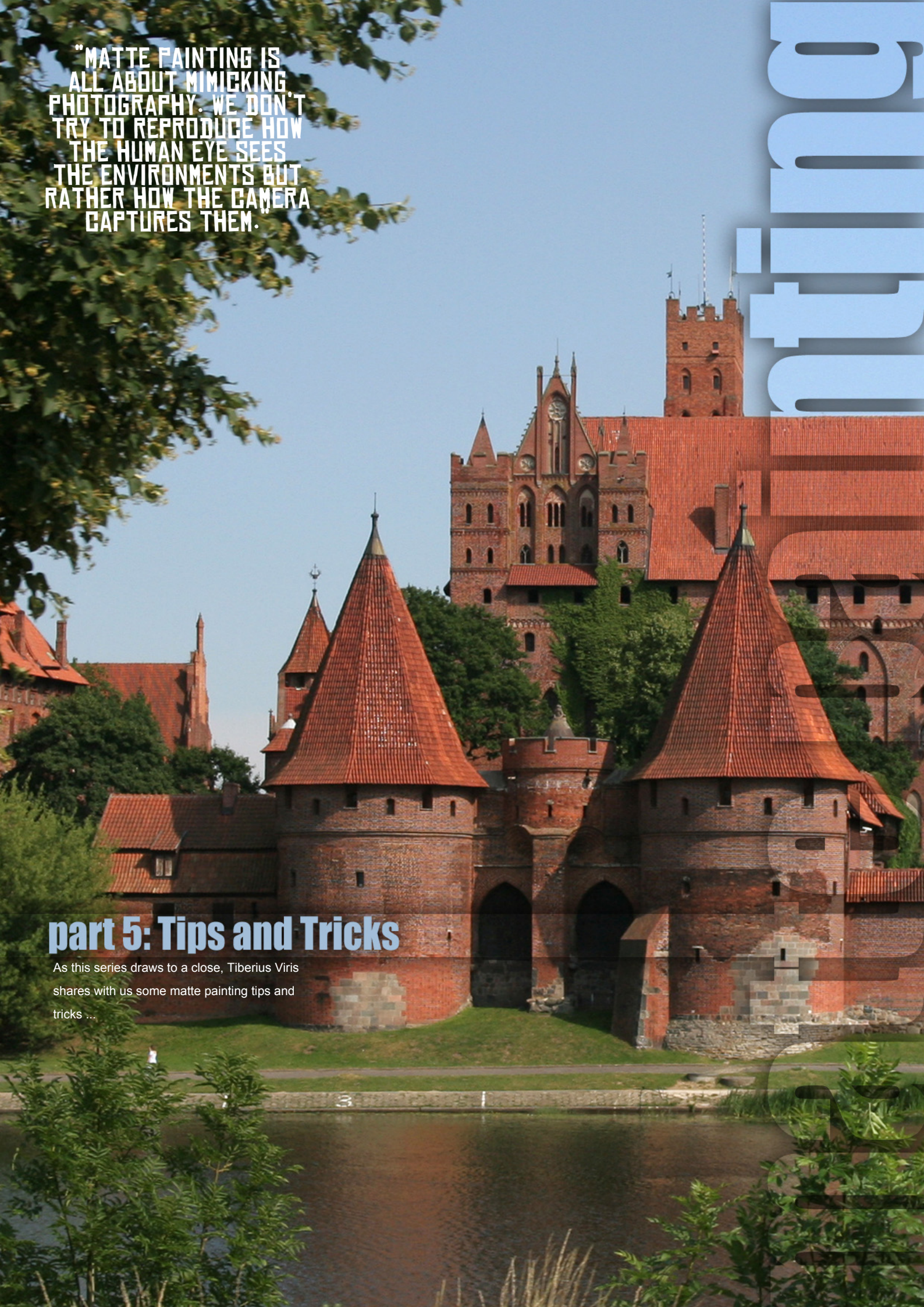
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"MATTE PAINTING IS
ALL ABOUT MIMICKING
PHOTOGRAPHY. WE DON'T
TRY TO REPRODUCE HOW
THE HUMAN EYE SEES
THE ENVIRONMENTS BUT
RATHER HOW THE CAMERA
CAPTURES THEM.

part 5: Tips and Tricks

As this series draws to a close, Tiberius Viris
shares with us some matte painting tips and
tricks ...



matte painting Tips and Tricks

CREATED IN:

Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

Here we are at the end of this series, which I really do hope you have enjoyed. During the last four months we've walked together through the process of some basic matte painting techniques, namely day-to-night (Part 1), summer-to-winter (Part 2), sunny-to-storm (Part 3) and fire and smoke effects (Part 4). You've seen how Photoshop can be a great tool and how, with only an average knowledge of it, you can achieve some pretty nice effects!

Shockingly enough, at the end of this series, I come to tell you that matte painting isn't actually just about Photoshop, and all that I have shown you has just been basics which are meant to give you a taste and to get your attention. You are now standing at the beginning of a wonderful road, but you must know that matte painting is much more than photo manipulation



Fig.01a

and, as the name suggests, involves a lot of art theory and real world understanding, too! That's why now, in this last part, we will try to understand such aspects and see what matte painting really stands for! So here we go...

1. ORIGINS

Matte painting is all about mimicking photography. We don't try to reproduce how the human eye sees the environments but rather how the camera captures them.

Traditional matte painting was developed initially around 1959 for the movies and was done optically, by painting (literally) on top of a

piece of glass to be composited with the original footage – hence the name “matte painting” (painting done on glass with a mask = matte). Nowadays, digital matte painting is less about painting and more about virtual set creation, yet it retains its old name because it shares the same goal with its grandfather.

Matte painted scenes are used widely for any kind of application that requires a virtual set. But, of course, movies are still where they are used the most; the goal being to produce realistic environments (sets) where actors can perform naturally, as if they were really there.

2. PLAYING BY THE RULES

All the rules from traditional art are transferred here and, in addition, a matte painter has the difficult task of making everything photorealistic.

There are several elements that “tell” the eye he's watching something that exists (even if it doesn't):

Depth: This is the natural progression of colours and focus that you see in nature. In the distance, elements have less saturation and contrast and details are harder to spot. In the extreme distance you will only notice two shades (highlights and shadows), while

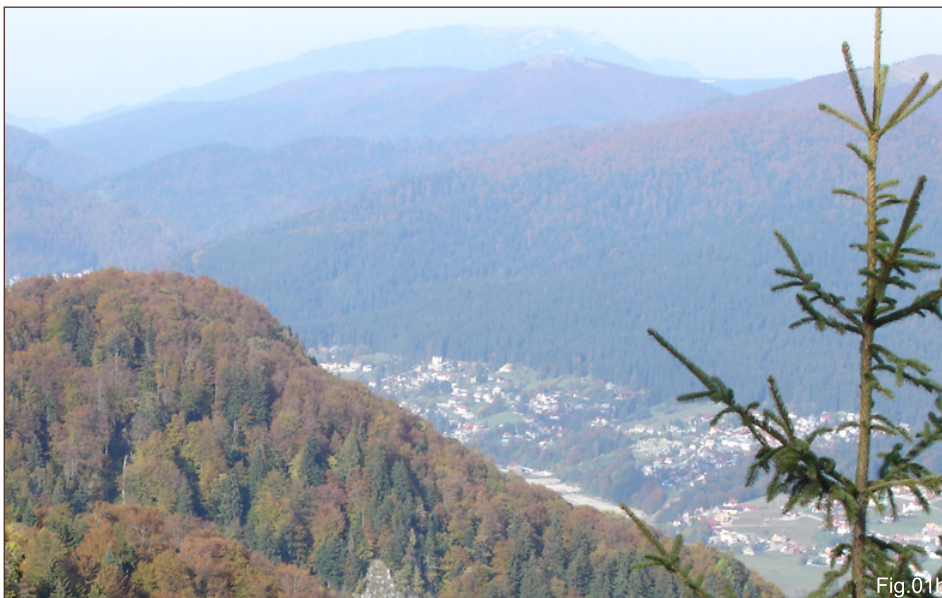


Fig.01b

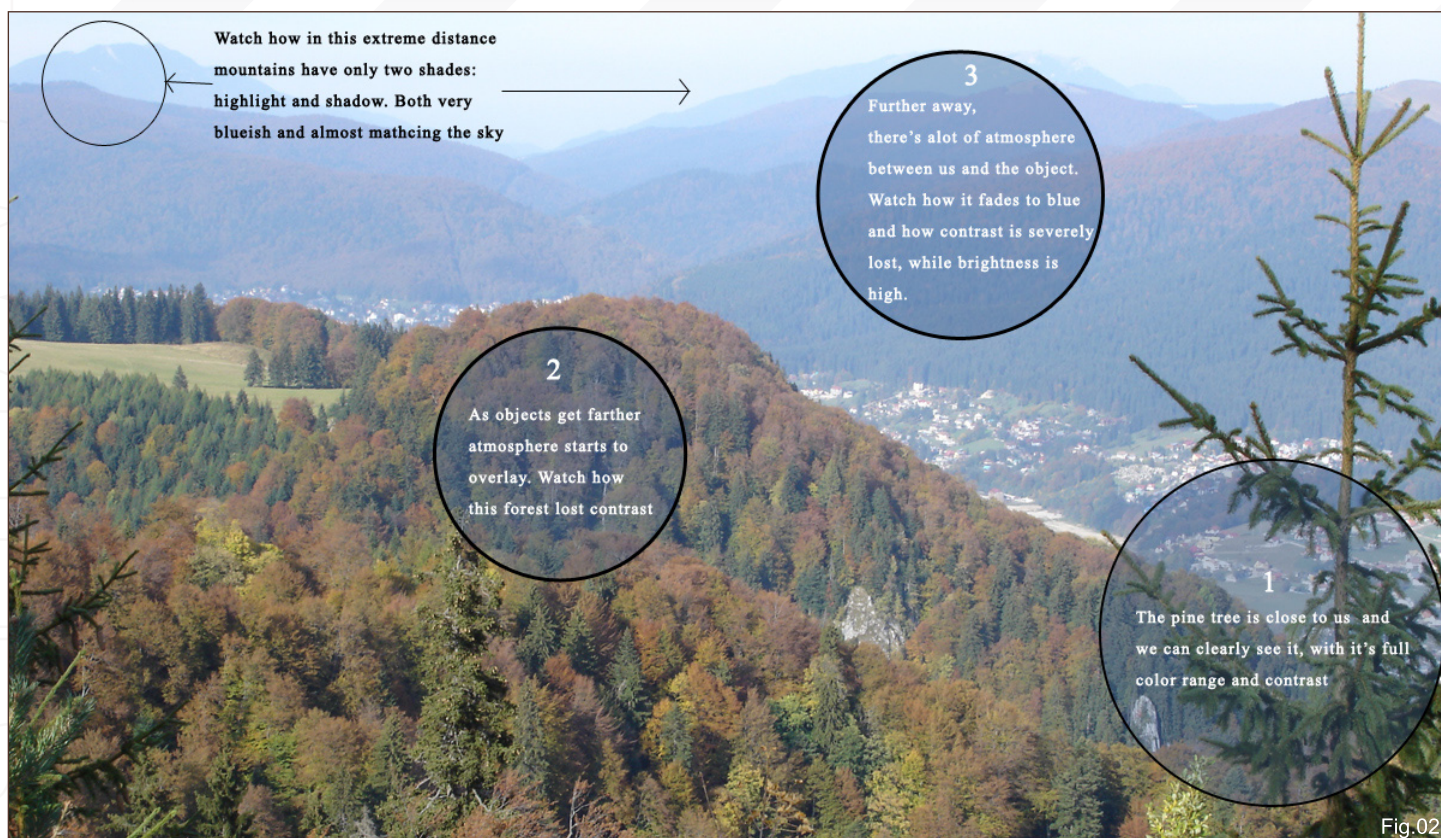


Fig.02

the objects tend to have a bluish tone, due to the heavy atmosphere filtering. On the other hand, the foreground (meaning the objects that are close to you) has normal saturation and contrast, full black levels and you can see all the details in them.

Lighting: While this is obvious in nature, one has to be careful when creating a matte painting so that all the highlights and shadows match the source light and direction.

Scale: Again, it's very important to match the scale of every element. You don't want a tree to be as tall as mountain, even if it might sound cool in a fantasy setting!

3. DEPTH

I. In Real World

Depth, or better said "the way an object behaves with distance", is one of the most essential aspects of realism. This includes two sub-aspects:

- 1 - how sharpness is affected;
- 2 - how colour and contrast recedes/fades

The first one is of less importance for us (but not unimportant!). It's the classic photographic depth of field; whereas, on normal shutter settings, objects that are farther away are blurred. How much or how less varies from scene to scene. The second one is more delicate and it's the main issue we are interested in. (**Fig.01a** and **Fig.01b**)

In a normally lit environment, the objects in the foreground have a high contrast, high levels of black and high saturation, while the objects in the distance tend to fade towards the colour of the atmosphere because there's more "air" between our eye and them, which acts as a filter and only lets certain light frequencies pass through (light is an electromagnetic wave, by the way!). This translates into low contrast, high brightness and low saturation. You'll tend to know this effect as "haze".

Take a look again at the following image and see the explanations. Of course, this is something that applies to Earth and our atmospheric observation. If you create an alien

world matte painting then take into consideration how atmosphere behaves there when deciding upon how much haze you should have. (**Fig.02**)

II. Mimic

Creating haze is quite easy, and there are many ways to do it. Out of these ways, two seem to suit almost every situation:

1 - If you have many different layers (e.g. a layer for a left mountain, another for the mid one, and another for the far right cliff, etc.), which is the best way to work? Simply select each layer and apply a solid colour adjustment layer on top. Choose the colour of the sky (use the colour picker – it's the fastest way to do it!) and reduce the opacity according to the distance. (E.g. for a very distant mountain you may use 50-60%, but for a mid one you might use 20-30%.) Don't forget to link this solid layer to the layer that you wish to affect, otherwise it will affect everything! (Press Alt & click between the layers) (**Fig.03**).

2 - If you don't have everything on its own layer then it's time to clean your tablet and

start painting haze. Use a soft-edged, round brush, set to pen pressure on both opacity and fading, and gently paint haze, more onto distant elements and less onto close ones. Use a layer mask to brush out if you paint too much. As before, choose a colour for the sky using the colour picker and try to paint evenly.

Regardless of the method you use, you may also want to adjust the individual levels if they still don't fit, even after the haze. For that, use a Levels adjustment layer beneath the solid one and slightly, ever so slightly, move the black levels towards the right, or the white levels towards the left as you need to – less shadow intensity or less highlight intensity.

4. SCALE

I. Real World

Scale seems natural and quite a trivial thing for many people. Yet, together with perspective, it's the main source of errors for many new artists (and not only them!). It is important to have a good understanding of these aspects because,

together with depth, they are the main elements which create the illusion of distance. The human eye and the brain relate to objects in the scene versus already known sizes in order to determine how big another one is (or in our case to spot errors). It's all contextual and relative. For instance, we all know how big an average house is from our daily life experience. Seeing it in an image next to a pine tree which is half as small and with no other reference objects around it, would make us believe the pine tree is still young (because we know an adult pine tree should be much bigger). However, take the same house and put it next to a whole forest which isn't taller than half of the house, and you'd know something was out of whack! Which one is wrong – forest or house – will depend on the other elements that are in the scene. See **Fig.04** for an example (which is exaggerated for the purpose of the example).

II. Mimic

Obviously, making the right scale is easy, tools-wise. Simply use the Transform tool to

scale down. It's a good idea to have the object rendered very big and scale it down, rather than scale it up, and paint to compensate for lost quality. The trick is to choose the right scale. Look around the area where you want to place the object, see what else is there and then scale it in relation to the surrounding objects.

5. PERSPECTIVE

When it comes to matte paintings, the most common error you see is that of the angle of views. Because, with this technique, the artist uses samples and objects from many different sources, so it is important that all of them share the (almost) same perspective.

The second aspect of perspective is that of camera distortion. Because we try to mimic photography and not the real world, we should "copy" the way camera lenses affect an image.

Finally, a matte painting may be required to have unusual perspectives, like 1-, 2- or 3-point perspective, or special ones like cycloramas (take a look at *Star Wars* Cyclorama matte paintings – those made public anyway!).

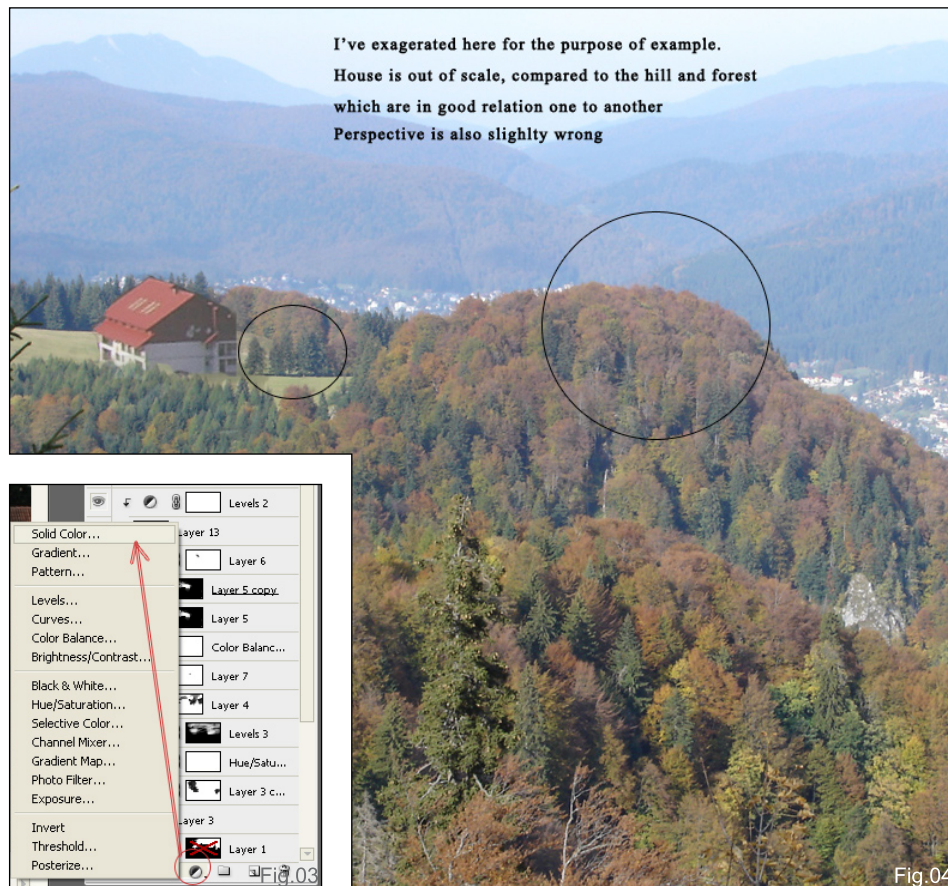
To achieve all of this, you have to plan your elements well and use your references wisely. Don't torture your photograph by stretching it until it breaks – you won't solve anything with that! Instead, try to paint and imply the right perspective; use another reference or make a 3D object and pose it at the right angle.

6. LIGHT

I. Real World

Last but not least, another important element of a successful matte painting is light – that is the way objects are illuminated and shadows form; something that is so natural, yet, as before, can also be a great source of errors!

Light can be your friend, but also your enemy. Use it properly and it can make your scene dramatic, while at the same time hide imperfections (in fact this is the main 'trick'



used by matte painters – hiding imperfections in shadow or mist). Use it improperly and it will destroy your scene!

The main mistake that you can see among new artists is having objects lit from different directions, like one from left, another one from the right and another one from the top (See **Fig.05**). You can immediately spot that there's something wrong with the house in this scene. In this case, a simple flip would solve the problem, but what happens when that's not enough....? (**Fig.05**)

II. Mimic

Creating the proper light is often the most time-consuming step of a matte painting. Because, usually, it's impossible to find references that fit together and which are also lit from the same direction (unless you are provided with plate shots), you must spend a considerable amount of time correcting the light and making everything match. There are three main difficulty levels, which are as follows:

1 - If the image you want to use is lit from the same azimuth/pitch but opposite direction, then a horizontal flip usually works. However, while this is okay for landscapes, it doesn't work so well on architecture or recognisable patterns.

2 - The second difficulty level is when light doesn't match, but the shadows are not too hard-edged (either overcast or with low intensity/ blurred). In this case, the typical process of correcting the element is as follows:

- Apply a solid colour adjustment layer (see **Fig.03**) with a dark colour (that obviously matches the hue/shade of shadows from the rest of the scene), and set the opacity to around 50-70%, depending on your needs.

- Duplicate the object layer, dramatically increase its contrast, and then set it to Screen with an opacity of 60-100%, again depending on your scene's needs.

- Create a mask for this layer and brush out the parts that are in the shade (hence you will see the dark layer below), leaving only the parts that you want to be lit.

3 - The hardest situation is when the shadows are many and hard-edged (think of some sort of a cliff). For this, either find another one or start painting in shadows and highlights based on the colours you pick from the original plate.

7. CONCLUSION

Matte painting is all about creating the illusion of reality. Depth, scale, perspective and light are the most important elements that trick the eye into believing. And, besides having them right, you can also use light and scale to your advantage in order to bring drama to your image and make your scene epic!

The End.

I hope that this series has been of use to you!

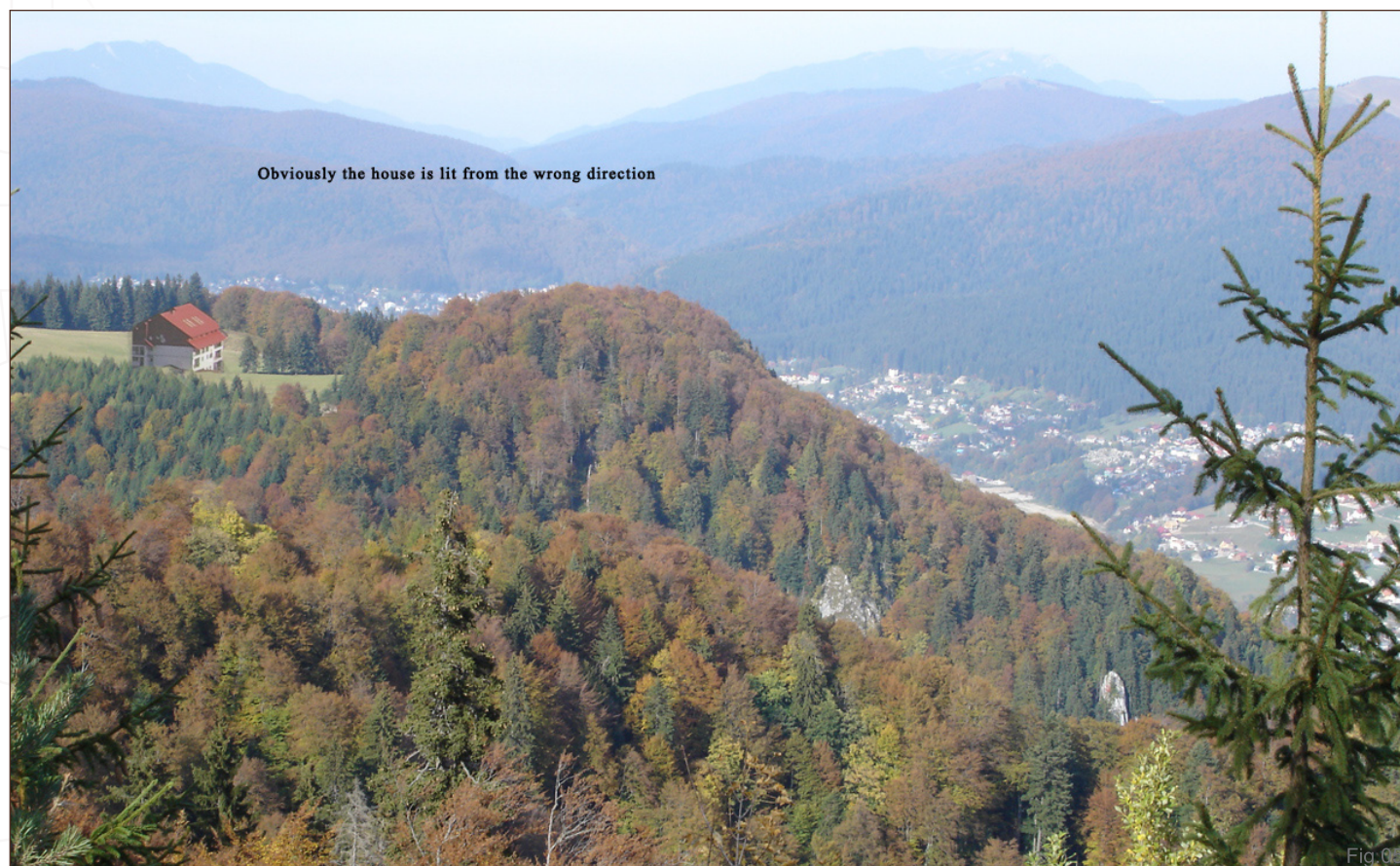
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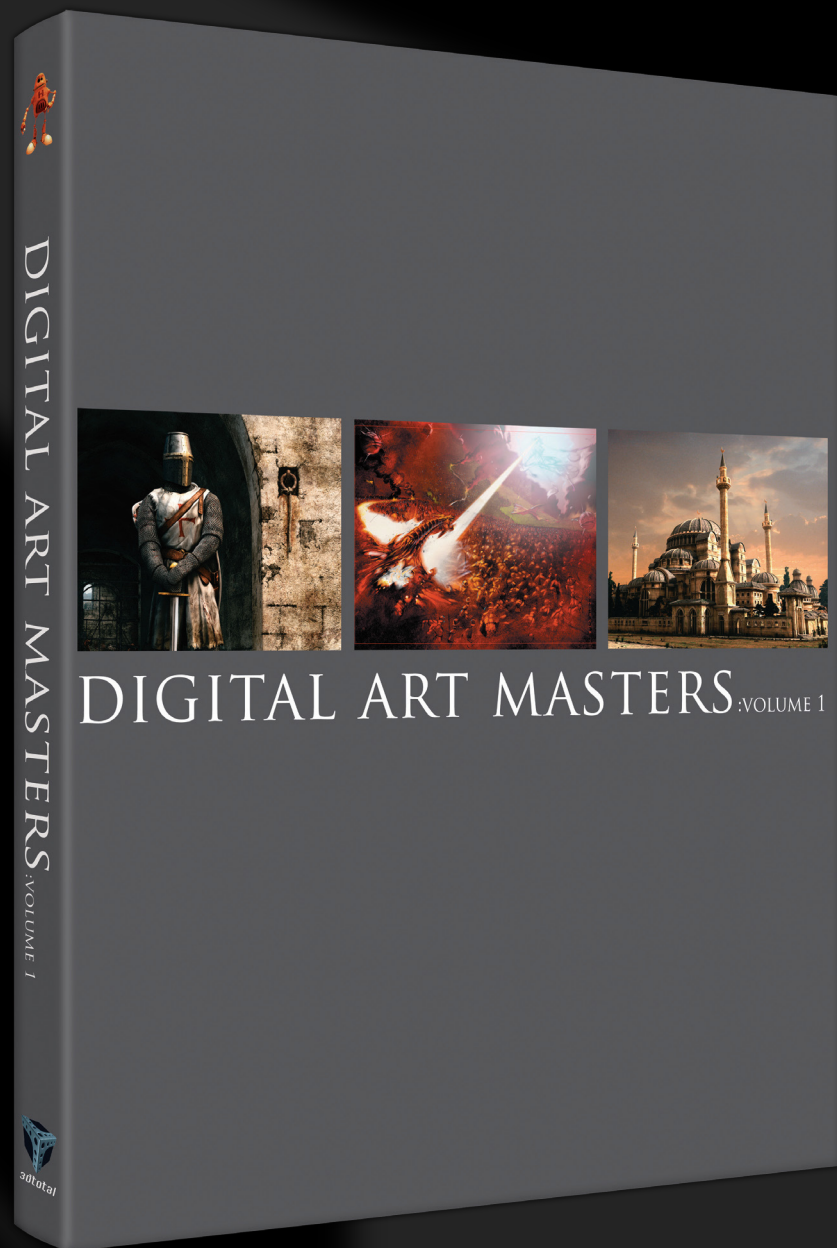
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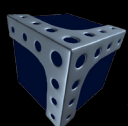
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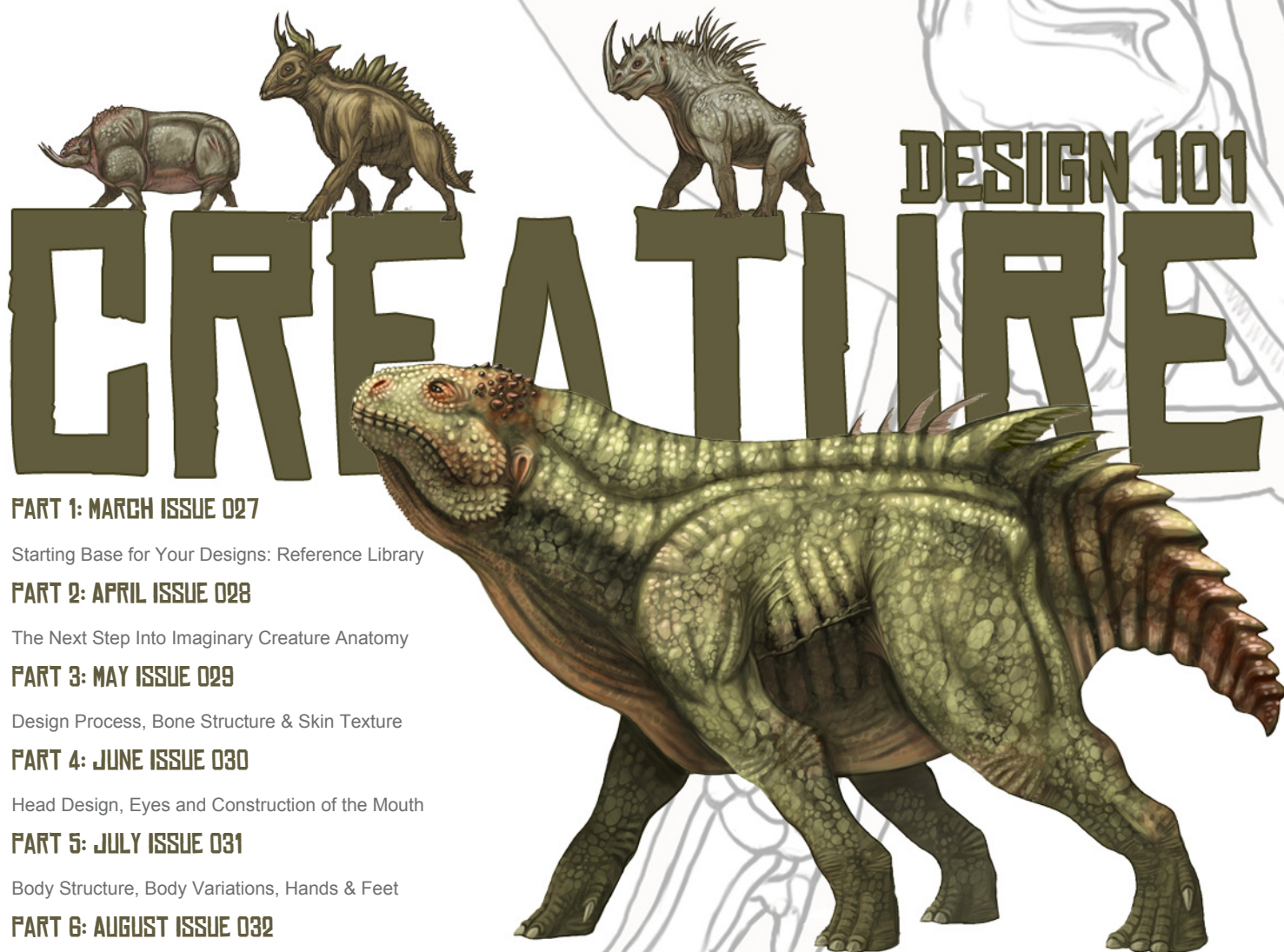
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"THE HEAD OF A CREATURE OR AN ANIMAL IS THE MOST COMPLEX PORTION OF THE OVERALL CONCEPT. THE HEAD IS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT CONTAINS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR A CREATURE TO SURVIVE. SHOW EMOTION AND IT BUILDS CHARACTER..."



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CREATURE DESIGN 101

PART 04- HEAD DESIGN EYES + CONSTRUCTION OF THE MOUTH

INTRODUCTION

The head of a creature or an animal is the most complex portion of the overall concept. The head is very important because it contains the essential elements that the creature needs to survive, show emotion and it also builds character. Some of the most vital organs, such as eyes, ears, the nose and mouth, make up the head of a creature. It's through the manipulation and plausible construction of these elements that you give life to an interesting design.

The eyes alone can tell you so much about a creature, so I'll be discussing that in part, along with the construction of the mouth; what makes up the mouth, how the teeth are generally situated, plus a few quick instructions on how colour and the shape of elements can change the overall appearance of a creature, whether it be good or evil in nature.

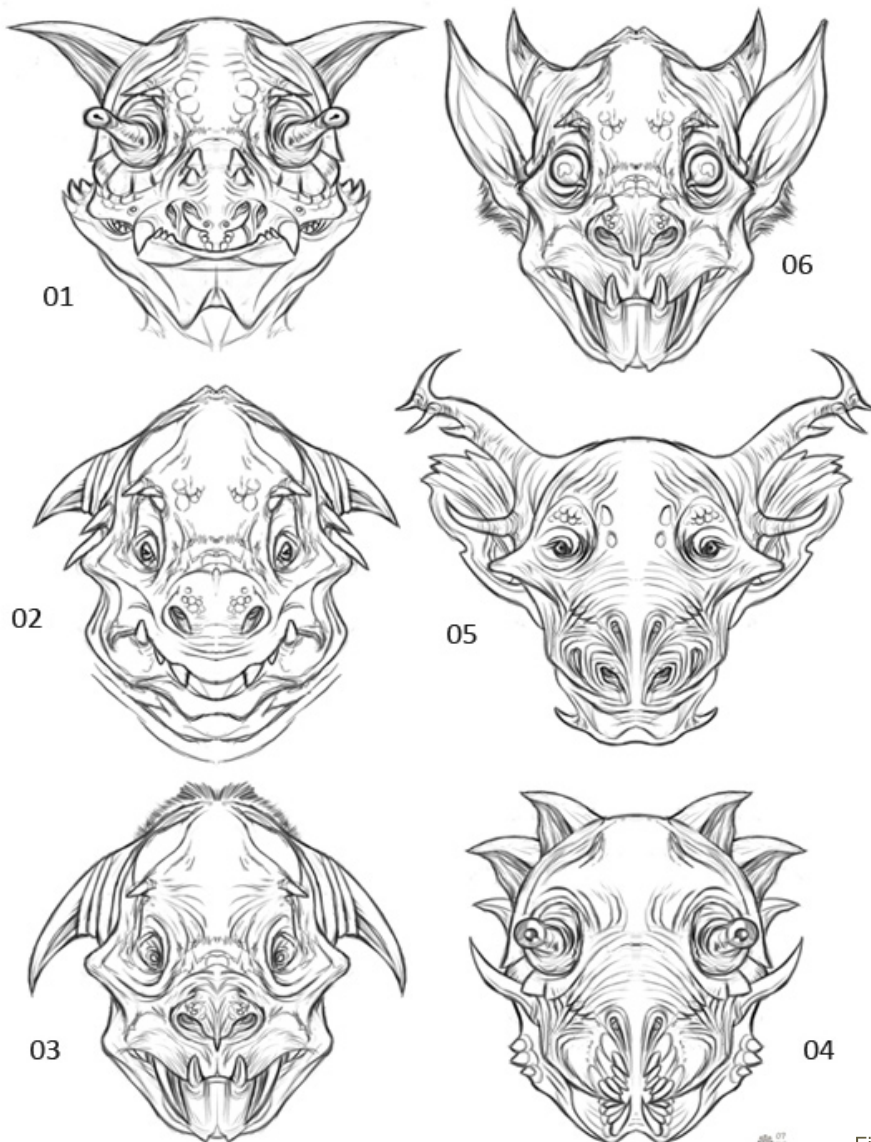


Fig.01



Fig.02

01: WARMING UP

A simple way to effectively produce some warm-up sketches without wracking your brain too hard is to use the mirrored effect of a front view. There isn't a lot of preliminary thought put into these designs and half the time I don't know what will come of them until the flipped copy is connected and then refined. It's possible that you can sometimes find a great design this way, and if not you'll at least learn a few things. This is really just a warm-up and a way to open up your mind to new possibilities and ways of designing. You'll notice how the heads from **01** to **06** are comprised of designs with and without ears, variations of eyes and teeth, as well as varied types of nostrils. Number **05** shows me a strong silhouette and an interesting layout in proportions and concept. Though it's a quick mirrored design, with a few modifications and more work it could turn out to be the gem of the bunch (**Fig.01**)!

02: WRINKLED AND OVERLAPPING SKIN

Just as there are people of different statures, weights and shapes, there are animals with the same differences (very muscular to very obese and fatty). In both main sketches you'll notice loose flaps of skin and a lack of visibility in the bone structure. We've gone over bone structures and how the skin and textures applied are laid over that part of anatomy. We have also seen how the bones on a muscular creature similar to a dinosaur or lizard creates shapes that show up even in the skinned version. So then, what guidelines do we follow for creatures that don't fall within this category?

Though there are animals and creatures out there, like people, where one species may have a visible rib cage and another may not. One great example of an existing animal is the hippo, which is a very large, obese animal that is comprised of fatty tissue and skin flaps. The head however is strong and muscular and shows the bone structure very well. Then there are animals like a rhino which are heavy but also very muscular. They have very thick skin that appears to break up into plates but are actually flaps of skin overlapped. So consider this when designing your creature; understand how a flap of skin overlapping another creates a crease. There can be very fatty creatures or thin creatures with loose, sagging skin, or even creatures that contain partial skulls and part invertebrate-like elements of design. So long as you stick with the shapes in perspective you'll find the structure without the use of the bones. I'll be going into this more in-depth in the next portion of the series (**Fig.02**).

03: TUSKED CREATURES AND CARNIVORES

This sketch is a little bit of both; it contains tusks which, as you'll notice in the closed mouth position, act as a defence, rearing backwards and almost acting as a pair of horns. They pose no threat when the creature uses its mouth to



Fig.03

bite or pierce flesh, but if the animal is engaged in an attack they can lower the head and thrust upwards. They also help protect the back of the head from any threatening attacks as the tusks rear outwards and backwards, making it hard to reach vital organs without entering dangerous territory. Incorporating a mouth element like this is tricky and it's something to be considered when thinking about feeding habits, movement and how the mouth opens and closes. Things can't always just "look pretty" if they prevent the design from working the way it was intended to in a three-dimensional world (**Fig.03**).

04: SIDE VIEW OF THE INNER MOUTH

As you can see, the mouth alone is a very complex part of a creature. This again is why the head of a creature is so important; the mouth is made up of many various organs, types of teeth, tissue and muscles. In this particular creature concept there are two very large teeth (incisors), known as tusks (**06**). Tusks are more commonly found in herbivores

or omnivores and are generally only meant for protection. They are also used for digging up food sources, male rivalry and marking territory on trees by debarking and scraping them. This is also a way of grinding down the tusks. There are carnivores with very large canines, such as lions and tigers, but so long as the tooth is not protruding out of the mouth it's considered a canine (**Fig.04**).

Elephants have the largest tusks, which are actually the second pair of incisors on the upper part of the jaw. It's important that, when adding a tooth like a tusk, you think about how the animal will be capable of eating. It's obvious that elephants' tusks are so large that without a trunk they could not feed in a normal manner. So unless you include some extra appendage allowing the food to be fed into the mouth, make sure the tusk does not block the front of the mouth or cross over the front of the mouth. It might look cool and sometimes that's fine, but it wouldn't be very plausible or functional.

(01) This does not have to be the case but usually the front teeth of most animals found in between the larger canines are much smaller. It's typically that there are around four smaller teeth, two slightly larger pairs on either side, and then space in between the much larger canines. This space is so the bottom canines can fit comfortably once the mouth is closed, without conflicting with the other teeth. This doesn't always have to be the case since in some animals, like a shark, there are just rows upon rows of sharp teeth which usually overlap the others by a larger extending lower or upper jaw.

(02) Creatures that have a similar skin type to mammals, or are similar to a human, have a flap of skin, such as the inside of the cheek, that allows the mouth to stretch and remain covered by this area when closed. In other creatures,

similar to a dinosaur or a reptile with scaled skin or thicker skin, this flap is separate from the outside tougher skin texture. It is a muscle that helps keep the upper and lower jaw connected as well.

(03) The tongue can come in various shapes, lengths and colours. This concept just happens to have a forked tongue which helps pick up a scent in the wind or other extra senses. This is because the creature has very small and poor eye sight.

(04) Central sharp incisors, similar to a shark or dinosaur, this creature's mouth is comprised of a large amount of sharp teeth, unlike herbivores which have a more distinguished set of teeth, each used for different purposes.

(05) The gums, as you can see, create a seal around the root of the teeth, helping keep them in place. If you take a look at the inside of your own mouth, and pull down your lower lip, you'll notice how the shapes of your teeth show through the gums, following down to the roots. You'll also notice that, with the opening of the mouth, the skin at the bridge of the nose, below the lower lip and the underside of the neck as well as the back of the neck, the skin folds and bunches up during this movement.

05: HERBIVORE WITH ITS JAW CLOSED

There are quite a few things a mammal contains around its mouth that a reptile doesn't. This again, as mentioned, follows over into creature design since we're basing all our knowledge on real world animals, even when we get into

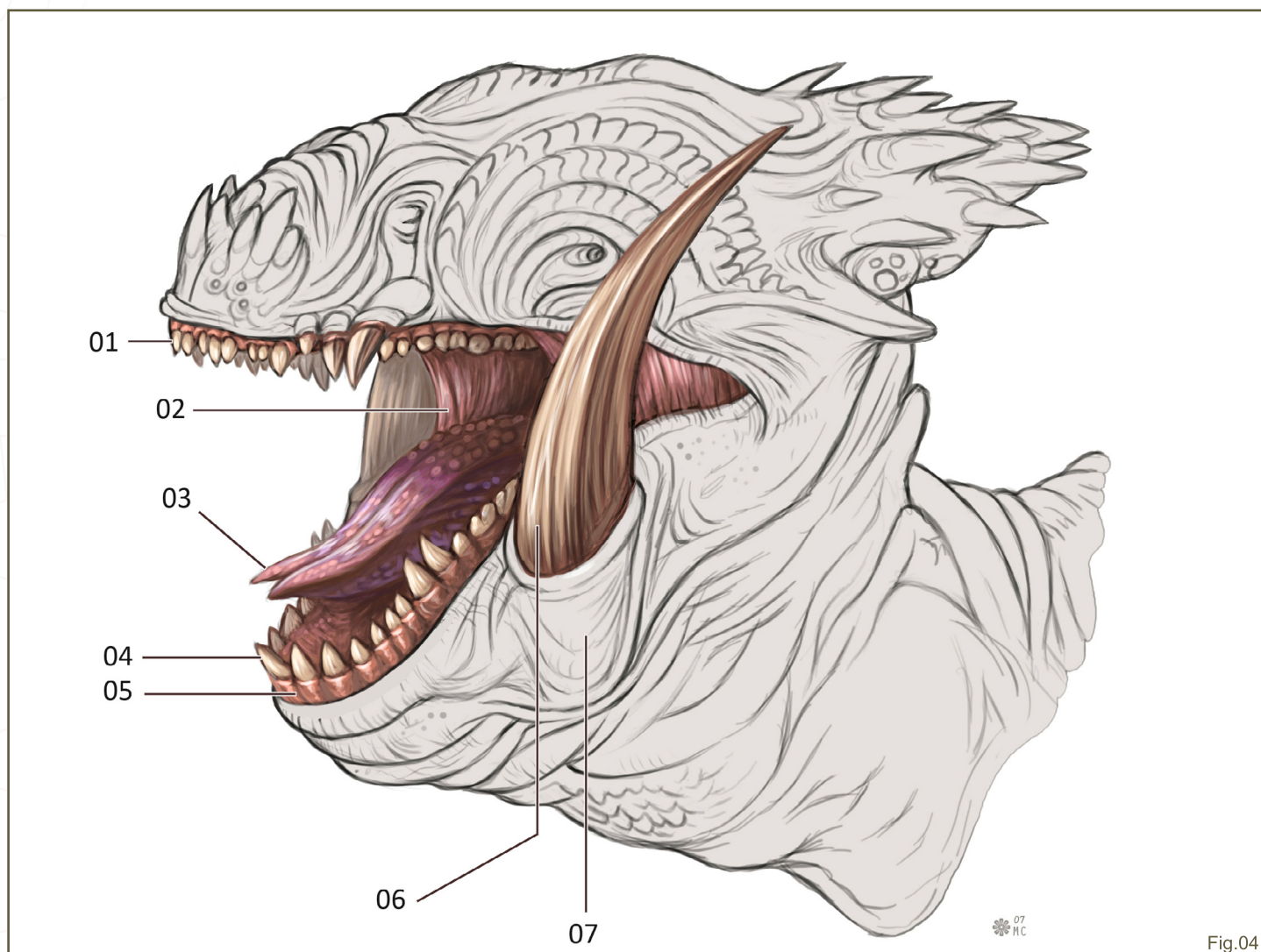


Fig.04

much more unique and otherworldly concepts that may not resemble anything we know. Mammals have lips **(04)** which help with the intake of food; a soft tactile organ that is flexible and capable of movement in some animals. The soft organ covers the bridge of the mouth and the teeth; it also allows for speech and unique sounds and mating or communicative calls (**Fig.05**).

(01) The cheek bones in a lot of animals are very visible, much more so in some than others. In creatures you can really push the cheek bones around to give your creature a creative look. They surround the ocular cavity or the eye socket **(06)**. The eye socket contains muscles and tissue that holds the eyeball in place, and it's the large cavity opening in the skull where the eyes would be placed. You do not need to include a nasal cavity or nostrils **(05)** in your creature design, but you can also add multiple cavities in this area to provide a more interesting nose. The additional pairs could each be used for separate purposes. Leading up towards the forehead from the nostrils is the bridge of the nose **(02)**. The bridge of the nose is an extension of the nasal cavity which leads back down into the mouth, which allows a creature to intake air through the mouth or nose and breath out or vice versa. **(03)** This is a prehensile split upper lip, to help with easy grasping of foliage, twigs and other food sources.

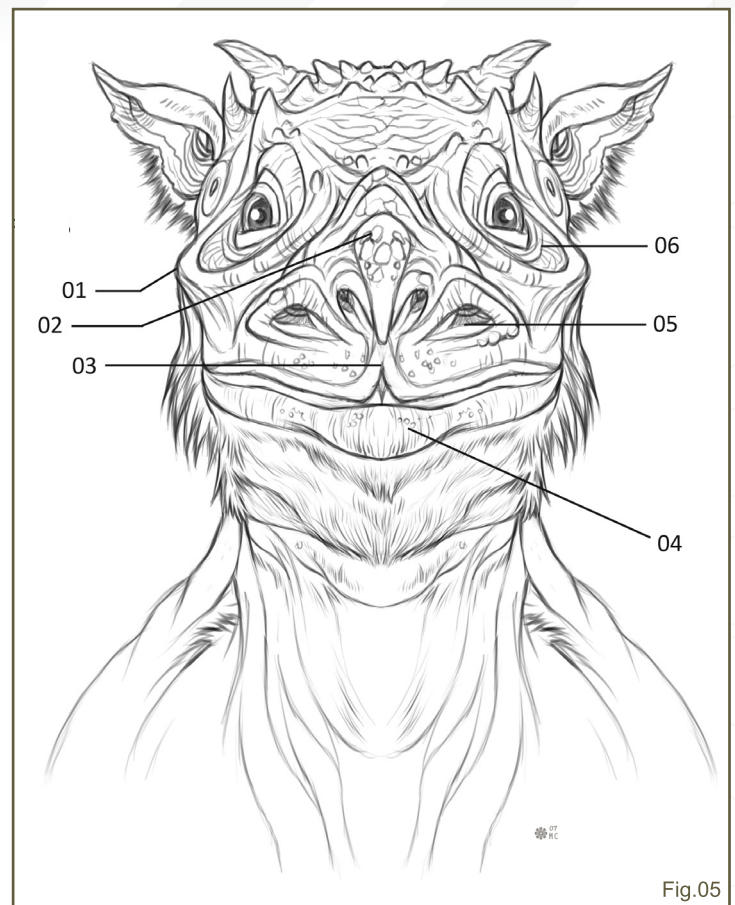


Fig.05

06: FRONT VIEW OF THE OPENED MOUTH

Here we are with another diagram of the inside of a creature's mouth. This one is a bit more detailed concerning a herbivore's mouth construction and the teeth. **(01)** The gums are again visible and showing the teeth as they continue to the roots. It's important to remember this because, if you were just to draw or paint the gums as one big, flat panel of tissue, it wouldn't be quite correct. It depends on what you're going for, but in terms of a more natural look the gums have a connected column type effect curving to the shape of the teeth. **(02)** I decided for this creature I wanted one large incisor that is split but connected towards the root. This is a large gnawing tooth used to strip bark, shear hard fruit and food sources, or tear foliage off branches. The other thing to remember about creatures and animals is their teeth will not be a pure white. More often than not they will be a stained yellow from blood or enamel build up; creatures do not brush their teeth like a human, and a lot of species will grow multiple pairs as they wear out or have a need to gnaw and grind down their teeth that continue to grow in size.

(03) Molars are unique to many different species of animal so they can appear in many different shapes and sizes, as well as the amount and spacing. The most complicated teeth are used for grinding food into smaller bits, in order to make swallowing easier. They are located at the back of the jaw and grind the food in a side to side jaw motion. The

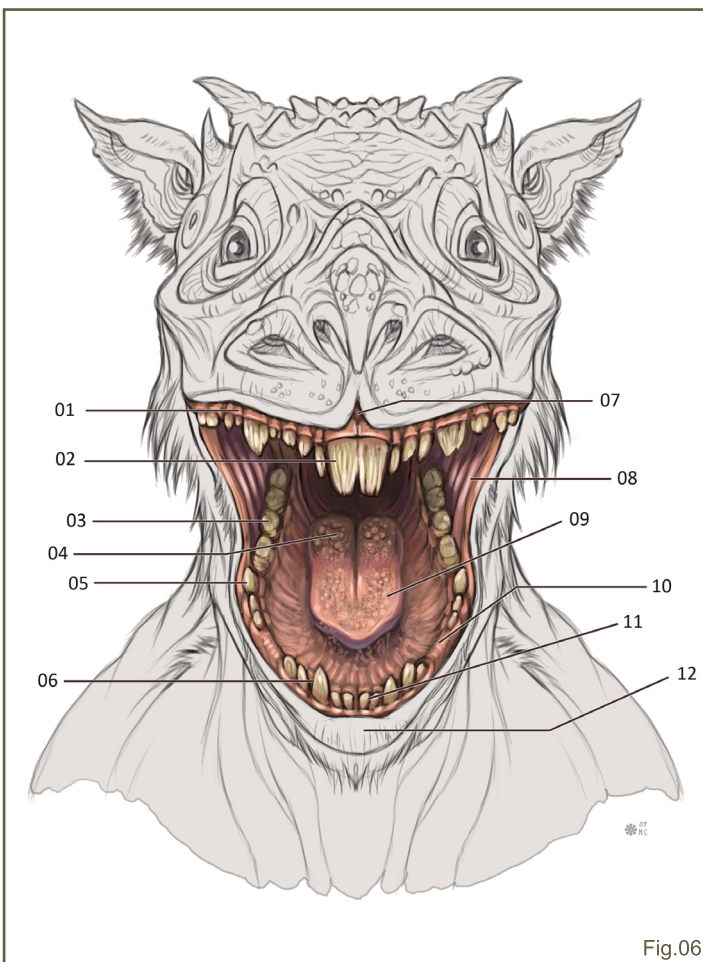


Fig.06

molars are generally wider and flat with ridges. (04) Taste buds found on the top of the tongue are little mushroom-shaped bumps used to distinguish the taste and other information of a food source. This helps a creature determine if the food is bitter, bad, poisonous or edible. (05) Here are a set of small rear canines, which are usually found closer to the front of the mouth but this is a conceptual design. (06) Here's a secondary set of canines, located in the usual placement towards the front of the mouth. Canines are found in herbivores, mammals and people, and are used for tearing tougher parts of meat or vegetation. (07) This is a gap between the prehensile lip split, showing the gums of the large connected incisor.

(08) The inner muscle of the cheek, connecting the upper and lower jaw, is stretched out at this position of the mouth opened wide. (09) The tongue is a muscular organ used for a lot of different purposes: it enables the ability of

speech along with the lips; it serves the purpose of tasting favours; it's capable of manipulating and moving the food around to be chewed and swallowed. (10) An empty space of gum in between the canines allows for the larger upper incisors to fit comfortably. (11) Here's

a common set of four small incisors for sharp sheering of various food sources, not meant for grinding like the molars. (12) Finally, here's the large lower lip, capable of a flexible amount of movement (Fig.06).

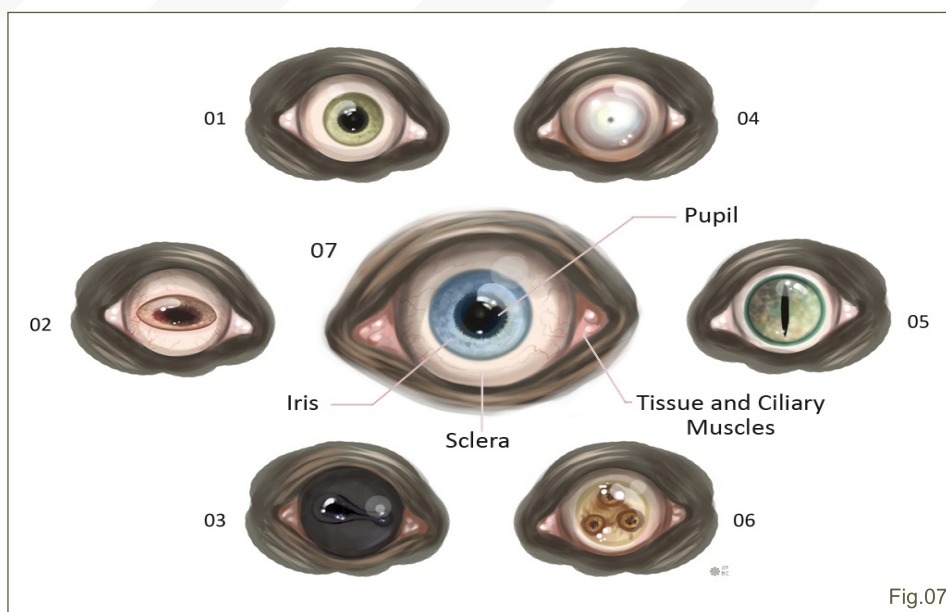


Fig.07

07: THE PUPIL DESIGN OF THE EYE

The eyes of a creature can be varied in the form and shape of its extension, as well as the shape of the eyelids and outer lining of the eyes. However, focusing purely on the actual pupil and iris of the eye there are thousands of possibilities which will drastically affect the nature and appearance of your creature. The eyes contain so much personality and mood that it's an important decision in design.

(01) This is a generic pupil shape, as seen in many humans and other mammals. A perfectly round iris and round pupil. (02) A horizontal pupil can really provide a strange look, often found in mammals like a goat, or amphibians like frogs. This type of pupil provides a type of alien look, but also a more docile type of creature. (03) What is unusual about this type of eye is the black sclera. This can be seen in animals like horses and lizards. Providing your creature with a black sclera can give it a horrifying appearance because it hides real emotion, unable to see the pupil. (04) Quite



Fig.08

the opposite, an eye design containing no iris and a very small pupil can also produce an eerie effect, usually something you might see in a zombie-like creature. (05) Here's a typical reptilian eye, usually found in snakes and some lizards or frogs – a small vertical slit pupil which can provide another type of evil-looking design that feels uneasy or unnatural. (06) Just to show you how you can take the pupil in any direction you like, I split the iris up into three separate points, all connected by a randomly-shaped iris.

(07) Eyes are made up of a few simple parts, at least the only ones you really need to know. There is the black portion, called the pupil, which regulates the amount of light entering the eye. The brighter the light surrounding the pupil, the smaller it will get because the eye doesn't need to strain itself as much to see. With less light, the larger the pupil becomes in order to take in as much light as possible. This is why when you enter a dark room after coming from outside it takes a few minutes for your eyes to adjust. Your pupil is adjusting and taking in more light which, after a short period, will settle and allow you to see more easily. Then there is the iris which can come in many shapes, patterns and colours. The iris contracts and opens the pupil. Soft tissue found around the edges and corner of the eye are ciliary muscles holding the eyeball in place within the eye socket. The sclera is the fibrous membrane, and often white portion of the eye that can also be black in colouration, along with the cornea form the external covering of the eyeball (Fig.07).

08: MENACING AND DOCILE HEAD DESIGN FEATURES

The nature of a creature, whether it be good or evil, can be told through key design features. The eyes, as we just discussed, can give you a lot of insight into whether the creature is meant to appear horrifying or harmless. Other things, such as shapes, can also describe the

behaviour and character of a design. In Fig.08 we identify the creature as being evil through a list of elements. An eye containing only the white sclera portion without a pupil instantly takes away any kind of emotion, be it good or bad in nature. In adding to the creature's devilish features, a large pointy horn signifies that it's also dangerous. Adding sharp points and shapes throughout a design will usually give it an evil appearance, especially when paired with a glossy, glazed-over eye. Included in the pointy shape reference, by showing teeth protrude past the lips or lining of the mouth, or showing a skeletal-like structure, the creature will appear more menacing. Lastly, the colour can also instinctively communicate something that is good or bad. We, by nature, identify something that is red with spikes or horns as a demon, and something that is blue and fuzzy as "cute".

(Fig.09) Taking the exact same concept and more or less removing all of the things pointed out that give off an evil vibe will quickly change the first impression of the creature's nature. I've removed the long, pointed horn and extended the side of its skull into two downward spiralling horns with a soft, round edge. I covered the teeth and filled in the skeletal structure of its muzzle, and changed the overall colours to a more dull greenish-blue, and soft blue eyes. The eyes were positioned at a slight upward tilt, which lessens the angry expression. All in all, it completely changes the creature from what appeared as a form of demon to a docile harmless creature (Fig.08 and Fig.09).

MIKE CORRIERO

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Or contact:

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07
HC

Fig.09

SynthEyes 2008

Match-moving and Stabilization



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SCALE OF THINGS..."

Perspective is the very
foundation which we
build our paintings /
drawing on, you got to
get your perspective
correct if you want
your scene to look
realistic enough.

understanding perspective

by robin olsson

understanding perspective

INTRODUCTION

Perspective is the very foundation which we build our paintings and drawing upon. You've got to get your perspective correct if you want your scene to look realistic enough.

In basic terms, you need to know about your Horizon Line (which will be called HL during this tutorial to keep things simple). This line represents the viewers' eye line, which means that, if you were the camera man shooting a scene, the horizon line would be where your camera is located (from above, below, sideways, etc.).

Perspective Lines (PL) – These imaginable lines extend from objects edges and recede until they meet up at a point on the horizon line (known as the vanishing point).

Vanishing Point (VP) – The vanishing point is where the straight lines, drawn from your object towards the horizon line, converge and appear to disappear (**Fig.01**).

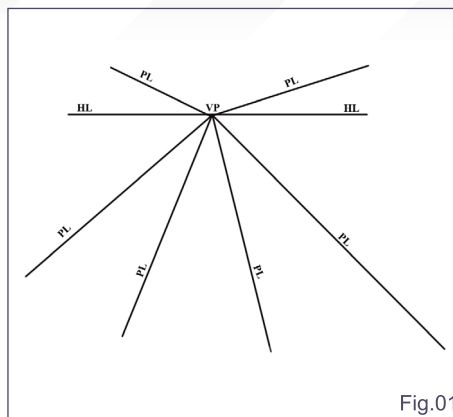


Fig.01

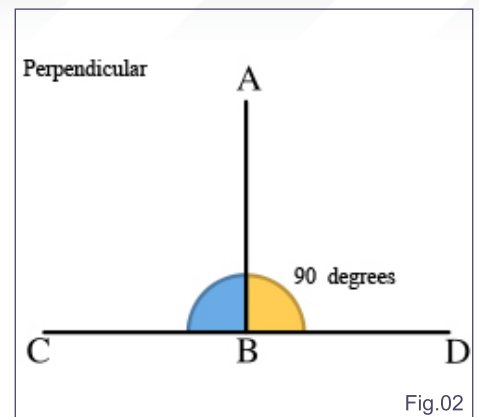


Fig.02

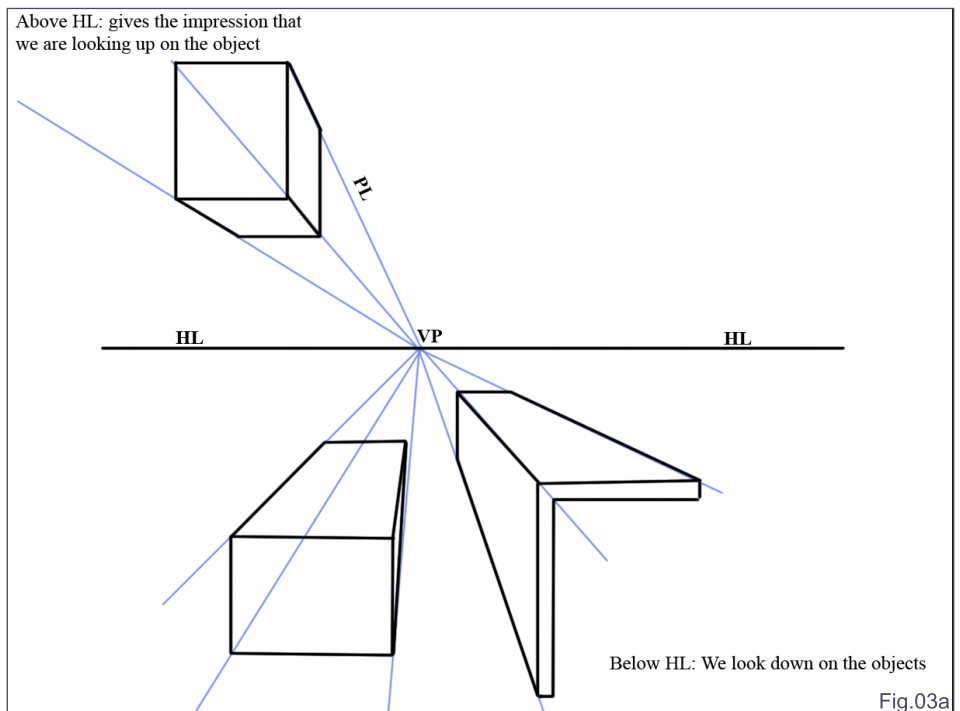


Fig.03a

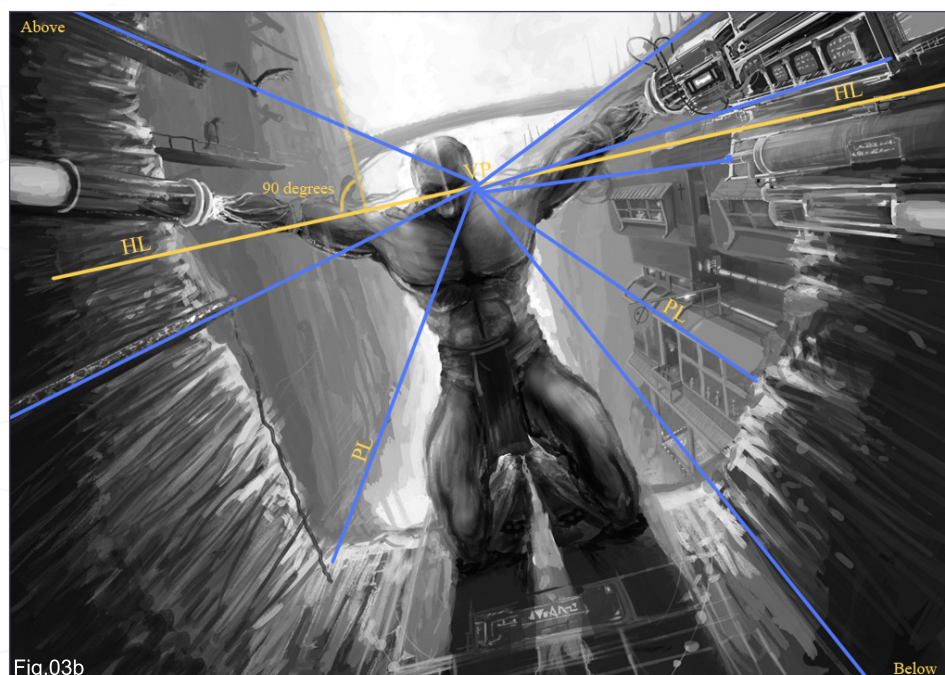


Fig.03b

1-POINT PERSPECTIVE

1-point perspective is where all lines converge to the same single vanishing point, and where all horizontal lines stay parallel with the horizon line and the vertical lines are perpendicular to the horizon line (see **Fig.02**). Here is an example of the perspective rules in use; notice how the horizon line is tilted but the vertical lines stay perpendicular with it (**Fig.03a** and **Fig.03b**).

2-POINT PERSPECTIVE

The 2-point perspective is very similar to the 1-point, but instead of using only 1 vanishing point we now use 2. The rules are the same: horizon line, vanishing point (now 2 of them)

and perspective lines. Note that all vertical lines still must be 90 degrees to the horizon line, otherwise you will lose the illusion of everything being straight (**Fig.04**).

As you can see in the following example, perspective can be used for all types of scenes. Here 2 point perspective has been used to give the image a much greater feeling of width, which couldn't be achieved with a simple 1-point perspective. Note how all parallel lines converge to the vanishing points. It's exactly the same principal as the simple example with the box, just that here we have added some more boxes and modified its shape a bit, but the rules stay the same (**Fig.05** and **Fig.06**)!

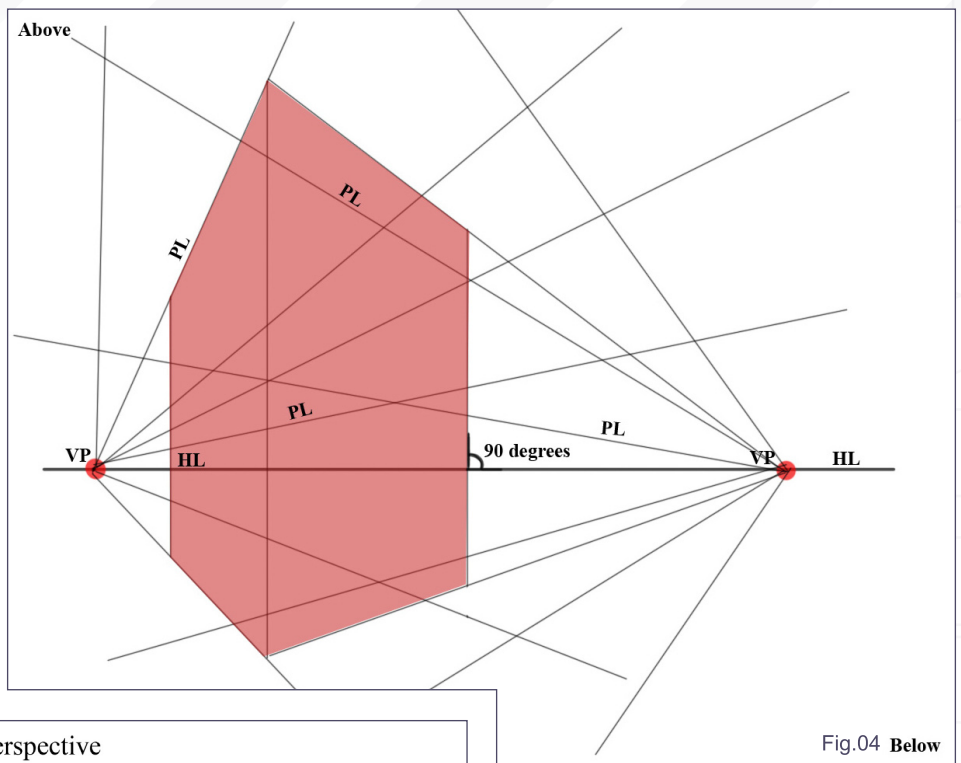


Fig.04 Below

2 point perspective

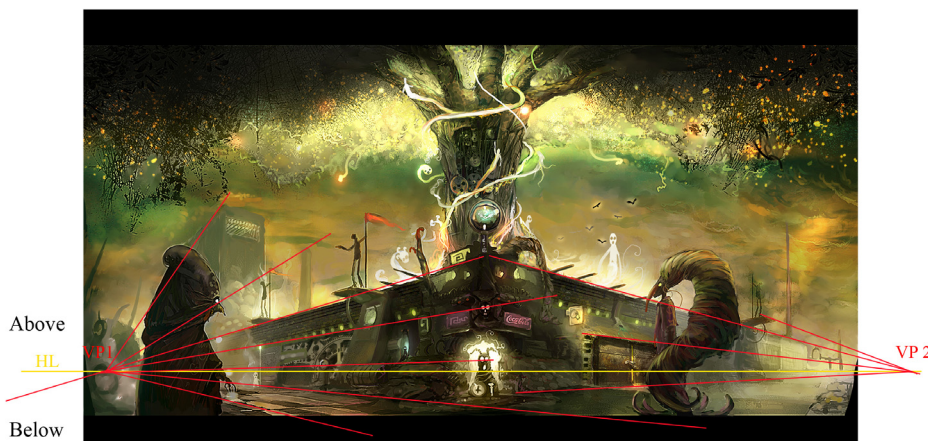


Fig.05

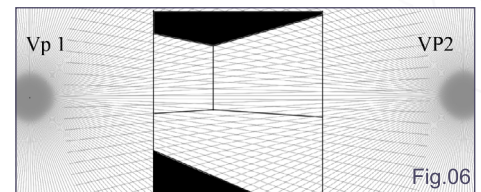


Fig.06

3-POINT PERSPECTIVE

If you want to add more realism and an even greater feeling of height, this type of perspective is what many people would use. By adding a 3rd vanishing point at the top or at the bottom of your scene, it looks even more like we are looking up/down on something that is very tall. When we were studying 1- and 2-point perspective, we learned that all vertical lines were entirely parallel, but those lines are actually tilted a tiny bit now and somewhere high above your paper where they will eventually meet up into a vanishing point. So 1- and 2-point perspectives are actually simplified versions which don't use this 3rd vanishing point (**Fig.07** and **Fig.08**).

4-POINT PERSPECTIVE

This isn't much different than 3-point perspective – you just add another vanishing point. As you can see, you don't really need the horizon line

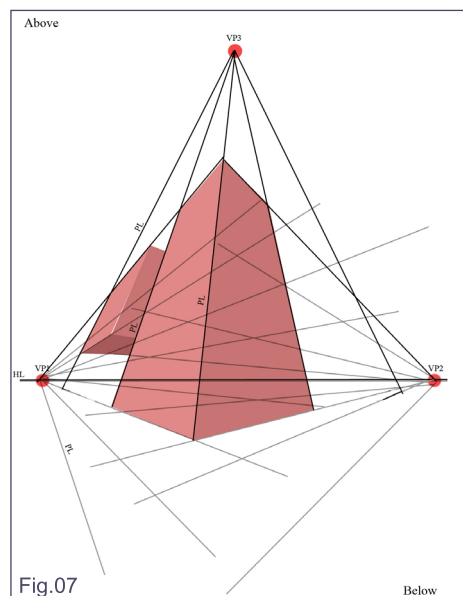


Fig.07

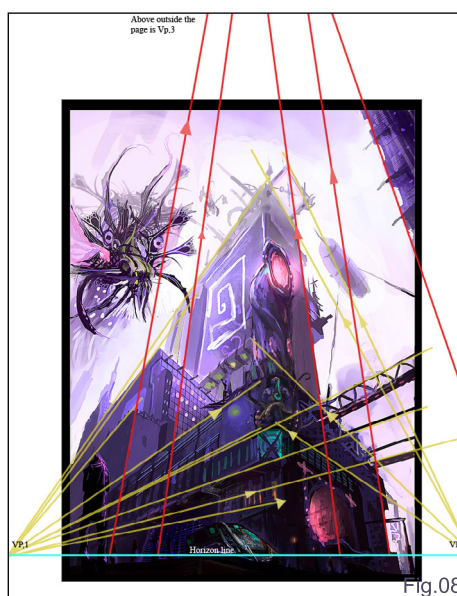


Fig.08

anymore, but you can use it to decide where you want to go from, viewing the form from below to view it from above. You can go on like this and add as many vanishing points as you want – 5, 6, 7, 8 – just add as many as you need (Fig.09, Fig.10 and Fig.11).

FORESHORTENING

Start by making a simple perspective grid with the object that you want to foreshorten (Fig.12a).

Draw from corner to corner to, and where, the cross intersects. This is the exact centre of the plane. Draw a line from the centre to your vanishing point (Fig.12b).

Draw a straight line from one of your corners through the middle line where it touches the edge of your square, and continue this line until it hits your perspective guideline. This point is where the edge of your new object ends (Fig.12c).

Repeat the process to get more of the same object foreshortened in space. Start from the corner and draw a straight line through the middle line where it touches the edge, and there you go (Fig.12d)!

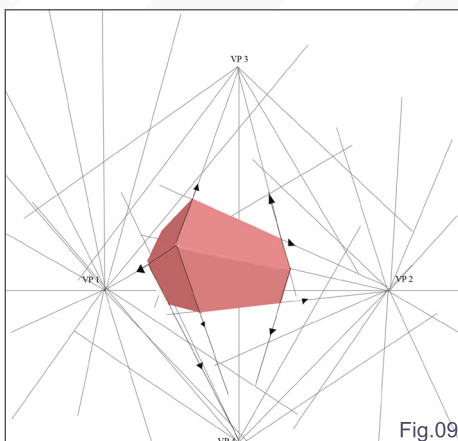


Fig.09

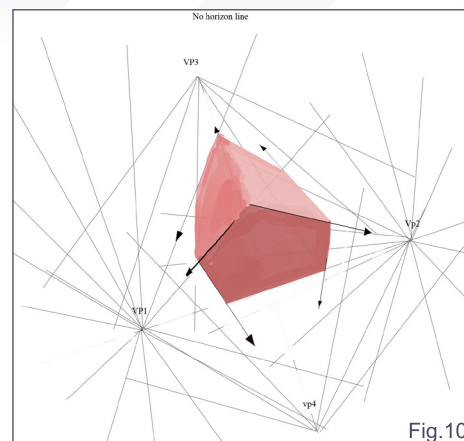


Fig.10

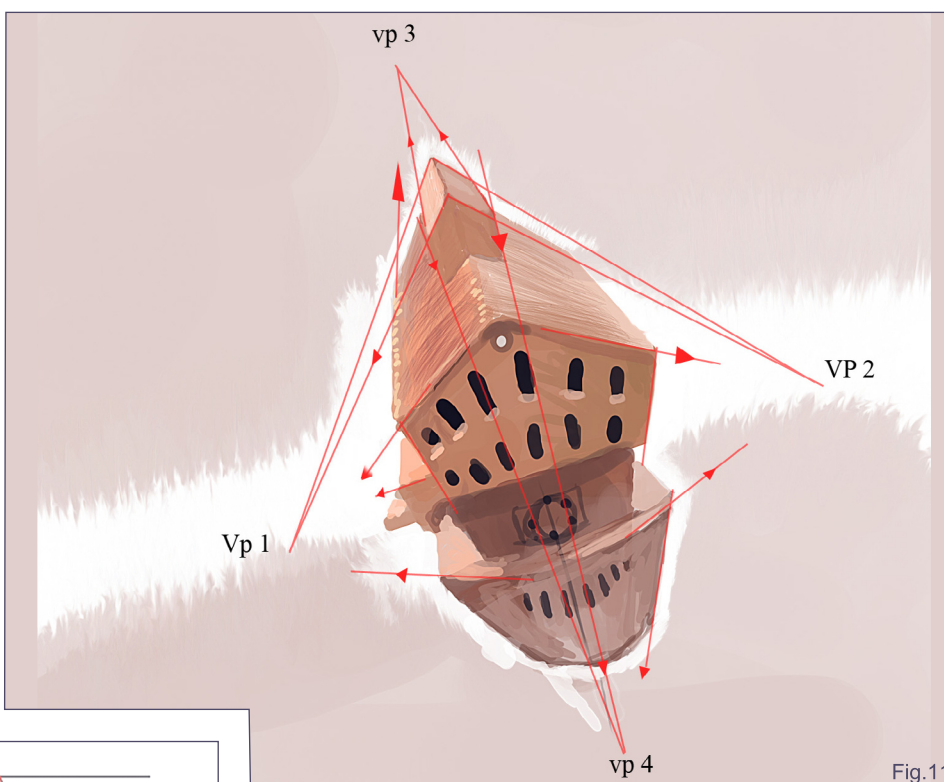


Fig.11

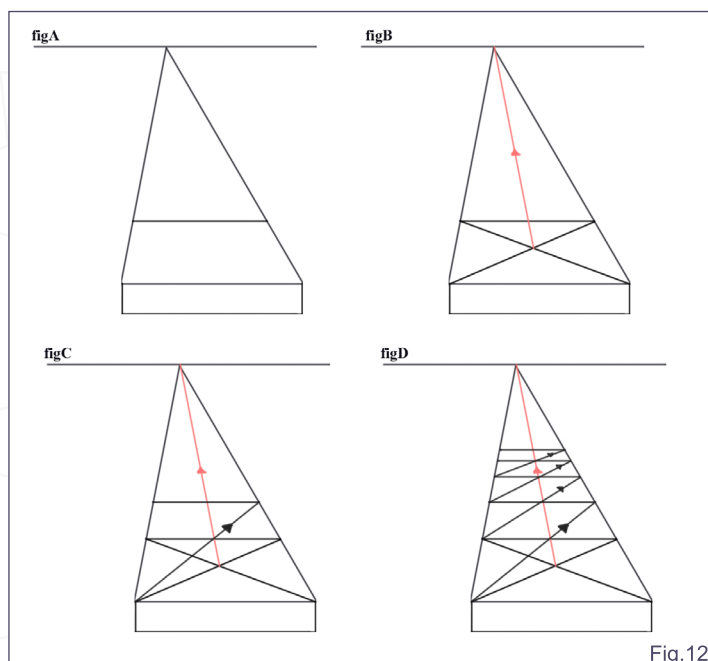


Fig.12

In this painting I've used the foreshortening method to repeat the same shapes in space. It's the exact same process as we did before: from corner to corner to determine the centre; draw from the centre to the vanishing point; from the corner to the middle line. By repeating shapes you can emphasize depth within your image and it also helps to convey a sense of scale of things (Fig.13).

ELLIPSES

An ellipse is an angled circle. If you take a perfect circle and tilt it, you will notice that you get different kinds of ellipses.

ANATOMY OF AN ELLIPSE

Major Axis – If you divide the ellipse on its shortest distance you will get the Minor Axis. When drawing ellipses in perspective this axis is really important.

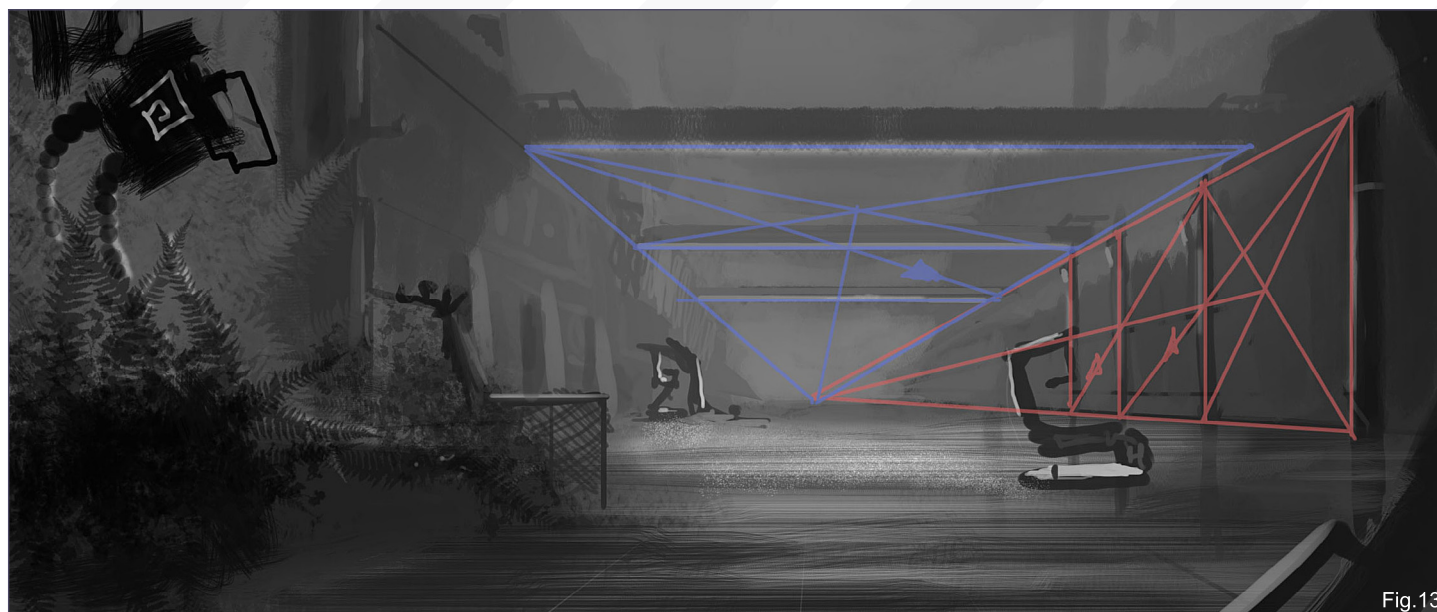


Fig.13

Minor Axis – This is the longest axis of which we really don't have much use for.

Degree – This is how thin or fat the ellipse is (in ellipse templates there will often be indications of what degree the ellipses are) (Fig.14).

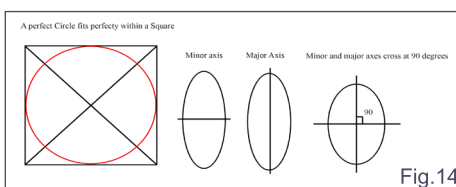


Fig.14

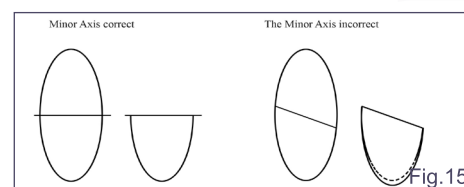


Fig.15

You can check your axis by folding it over. If your axis is correct it should fold exactly over itself (Fig.15).

ELLIPSES IN PERSPECTIVE

You can start by drawing a square in a perspective grid, as we did before with the foreshortening method, and then try to fit an ellipse within it (keep in mind that the minor axis of the ellipse must be correct and in the centre otherwise it won't look realistic).

Another way is to first draw the ellipse and find the minor axis (the minor axis determines the vanishing point), and then continue the minor axis into the distance and use it as a vanishing line for your other ellipses.

WHY DON'T WE USE THE MAJOR AXIS FOR PERSPECTIVE?

Well, if you know about the theory of "a perfect circle always fits within a perfect square", which basically means that the centre of the circle is the same as the centre of the square, but when it comes to ellipses the only axis that is at the

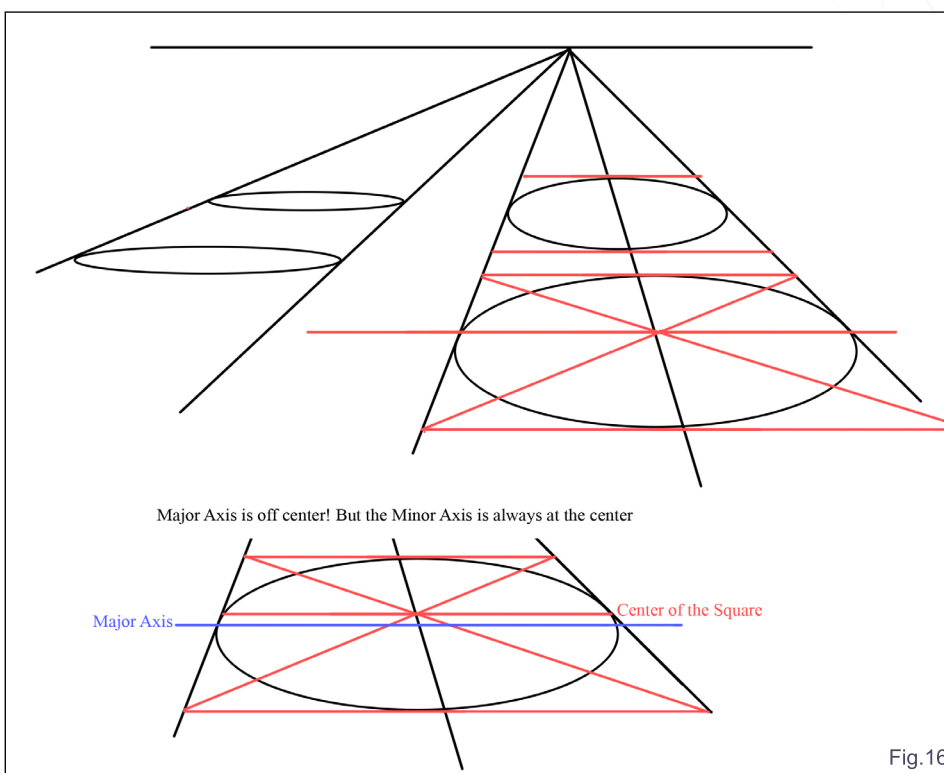


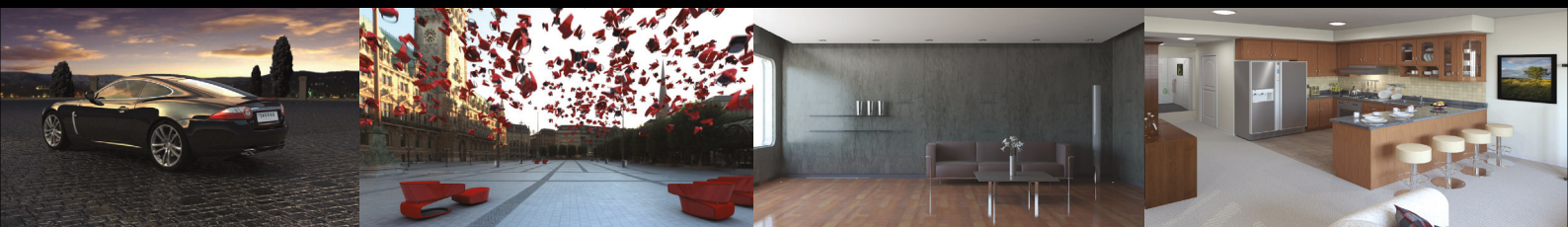
Fig.16

square's centre is the minor axis. If you divide the square at its centre and then divide the ellipse at its exact centre on the longest axis (Major Axis), then you will see that these two axes aren't located in the same place (Fig.16).

ROBIN CLAUSSEN

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DOCUMENT AS FLAT AS POSSIBLE.
THIS SIMPLIFIES MY PROCESS, KEEPS
THE FILE LIGHT, AND ALLOWS THE
FOREGROUND TO BLEED INTO THE
BACKGROUND MORE NATURALLY"



Chuck Wadey shares how to
created his image in Photoshop.

MAKING OF BY CHUCK WADEY

HALF OCTOPUS

THIEF

MAKING OF HALF-OCTOPUS THIEF

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

I painted this piece for a "Character of the Week" challenge at ConceptArt.org; the assignment was to create a half-animal, half-human thief. I had recently been watching a nature documentary and was blown away by the variety of textures and forms that cephalopods come in. The texture and eyes of the cuttlefish became my main inspiration.

THE SKETCH

The first step was a doodle in the sketchbook. It started as an unattractive drawing, running off of the page, and was later scanned and completed digitally. It's a wonder that I didn't abandon the



Fig.01

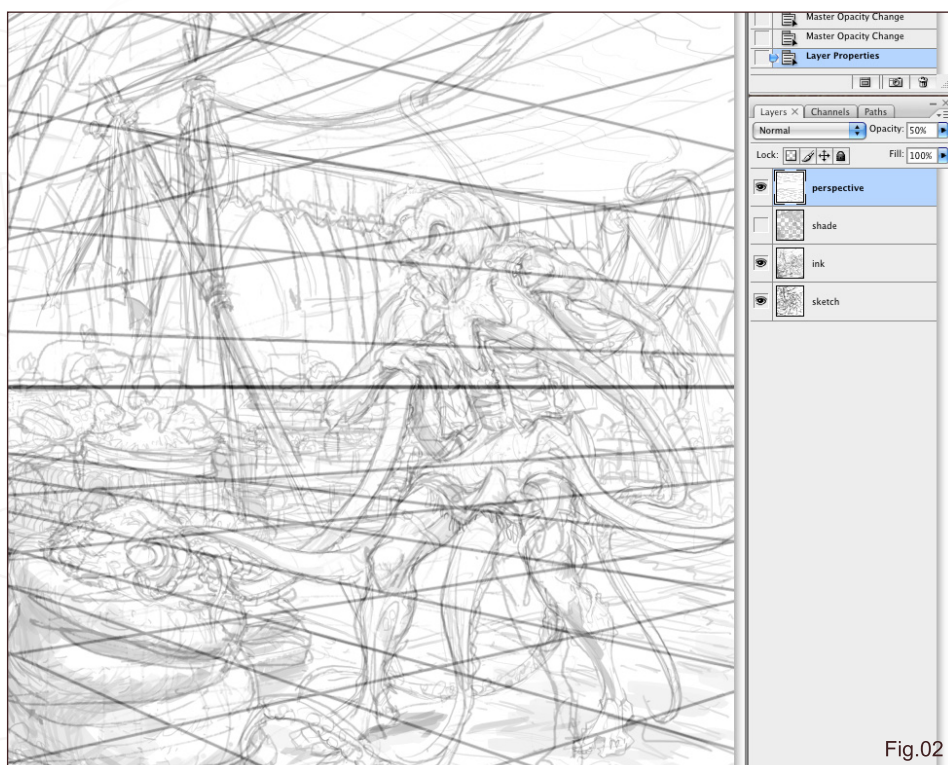
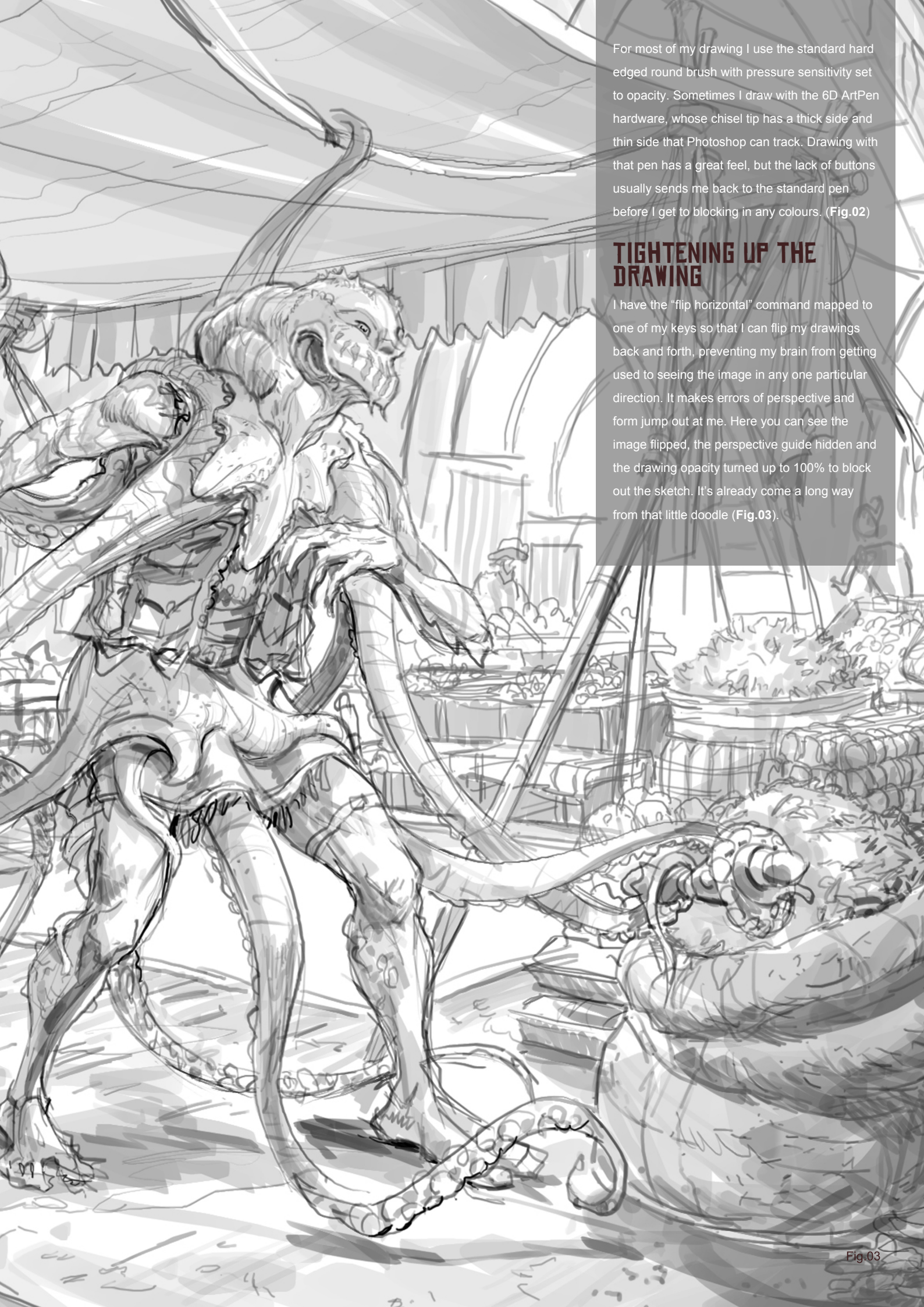


Fig.02

project here, but I thought that the composition in the sketch was good right off of the bat, with a nice relationship between the character and the background - and the thief already had the right attitude, at least in the upper body. The legs would be adjusted later (Fig.01).

SETTING UP TO DRAW

One of the first things I do when drawing digitally is overlay my sketch with a quick perspective grid using the line tool (U) in Photoshop. Keeping the perspective guide on a separate layer at the top allows me to toggle it on and off as I'm working, to ensure that the objects I draw will sit in space properly. I fill a new layer with white and drop the opacity to around 80%. This serves as my primary drawing layer and allows me to see both the sketch and the perspective guide when positioned in between the two.



For most of my drawing I use the standard hard edged round brush with pressure sensitivity set to opacity. Sometimes I draw with the 6D ArtPen hardware, whose chisel tip has a thick side and thin side that Photoshop can track. Drawing with that pen has a great feel, but the lack of buttons usually sends me back to the standard pen before I get to blocking in any colours. (Fig.02)

TIGHTENING UP THE DRAWING

I have the "flip horizontal" command mapped to one of my keys so that I can flip my drawings back and forth, preventing my brain from getting used to seeing the image in any one particular direction. It makes errors of perspective and form jump out at me. Here you can see the image flipped, the perspective guide hidden and the drawing opacity turned up to 100% to block out the sketch. It's already come a long way from that little doodle (Fig.03).

HALF-OCTOPUS THIEF

Making Of

2d
Artist

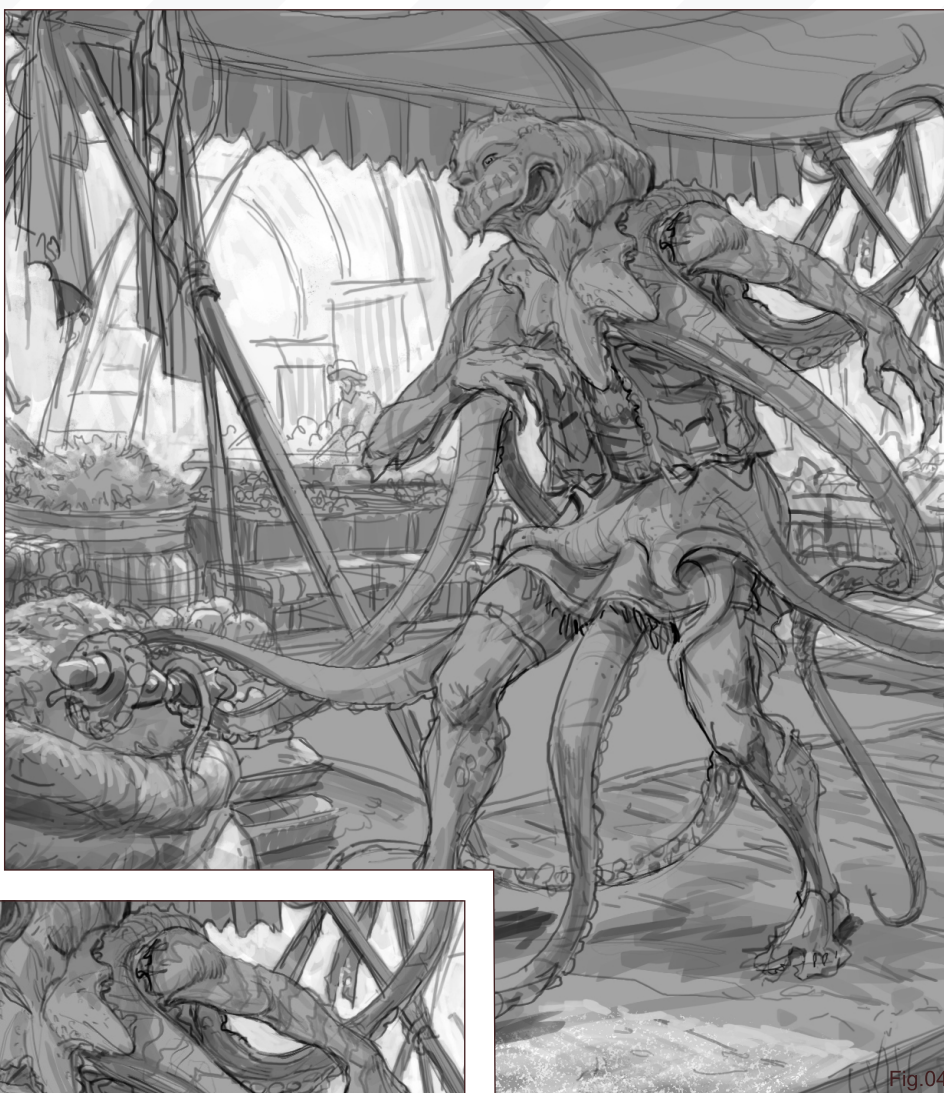
In this image the greyscale toning has gotten a little further, creating a nice graphic distinction between background and foreground. I don't like to go too far in greyscale because too much black can kill the colours. Now it was time to start laying in some base textures and colour (Fig.04).

TEXTURE

I dropped in some base textures from photos as early as possible, because I wanted to integrate them by building the painting up around them and layering brushstrokes over them. It didn't matter if they looked choppy or out of place at this point. Having the perspective grid available as a guide made it easy to transform (Ctrl + T) photos of brick and the rug to sit at the correct angle on the ground (Fig.05).

BUILDING UP COLOUR

Next I started to build up colour softly and transparently. I used the default soft airbrush



and applied default watercolour textures to the tip. Using this tool, I washed on broad strokes of warm colours on a new layer set to Multiply. Any overspray that I didn't want was erased back out and the layer dropped back down, and then the process was repeated as needed. When I'm creating illustrations in this way, I try to keep the document as flat as possible. This simplifies my process, keeps the file light, and allows the foreground to bleed into the background more naturally. I create new layers only to apply a series of brush strokes, and when I'm happy with the result, I merge them back down (Fig.06).

Also in this image, additional octopus textures have been added by dragging in photos and experimenting with either the Multiply, Overlay, or Screen blending mode (Fig.07).

In the next image I've continued to integrate the different background layers by adding washes transparently or drawing in little details opaquely. By this point it was getting harder to tell that there were photos under the food piles because I'd drawn over them so much. The texture in the lighter, upper left of the background was applied by a custom brush made from tree branches, and using either the Multiply or Color dodge blending mode (**Fig.08**).

RENDERING

This was the fun part, where I allowed myself to go in and draw all of the details that I'm usually cautioning myself against. With the standard hard edged round brush, pressure set to opacity and now also size, I modelled out the head,

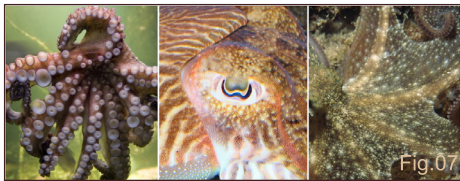


Fig.07



Fig.06



Fig.08



Fig.09

drawing the eyes and chiselling hard edges along the contour of the body and at the front of the jaw. The bottom rocker button of my pen was set to the colour picker so that I could select any similar colour around the area that I was working on and start rendering it instantly. If I didn't like a stroke, that's what the top rocker button is for: undo! (**Fig.09**)

For the tentacles, I composited photos for a few starting points and then drew in the remaining length of arms by hand.

DECIDING TO STOP

At this point, everything the painting needs was basically there. The last remaining step was some final value-tuning to make certain items stand out more if they were important, or integrate better if they seemed too piecemeal. I used soft textured brushes and if an area needed to be lighter, I set the layer to Color dodge. If an area needed to be darker or have more colour saturation, I set the layer to Multiply. I hid the uppermost tentacle in shadow, sprayed some lighter atmosphere in the middle ground, darkened the edges around the starfish collar and finally, I drew some more detailed trim and embroidery on the clothing. My work was complete! (Fig.10)

CHUCK WADEY

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Fig.10

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DOMINANCE WAR III

The war has ended and the winners announced. Read our Dominance War III article inside! We also chat with Antonio Jose Gonzalez about his passion for 3D (cover image)

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"DURING THE PRELIMINARY SKETCHING PROCESS, I KEPT IN MIND THE GENERAL CONCEPT I WANTED, AS WELL AS ALLOWING RANDOM SHAPES TO CONJURE UP THE CAVE'S ORGANIC DIMENSIONS."

Cave Dwellers

making of by Yap Kun Rong

With the aid of Photoshop, Yap Kun Rong takes us through the creation of his image.

Making of Cave Dwellers

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRO

In my mind I pictured a dark, secluded cave, and I wanted the focus to be upon a tiny settlement inside this massive cave. Having looked through piles of incredibly atmospheric works, I was particularly inspired by John Howe and I knew I wanted to achieve an atmospheric fantasy look, very much like those sets in *The Lord of The Rings* films.

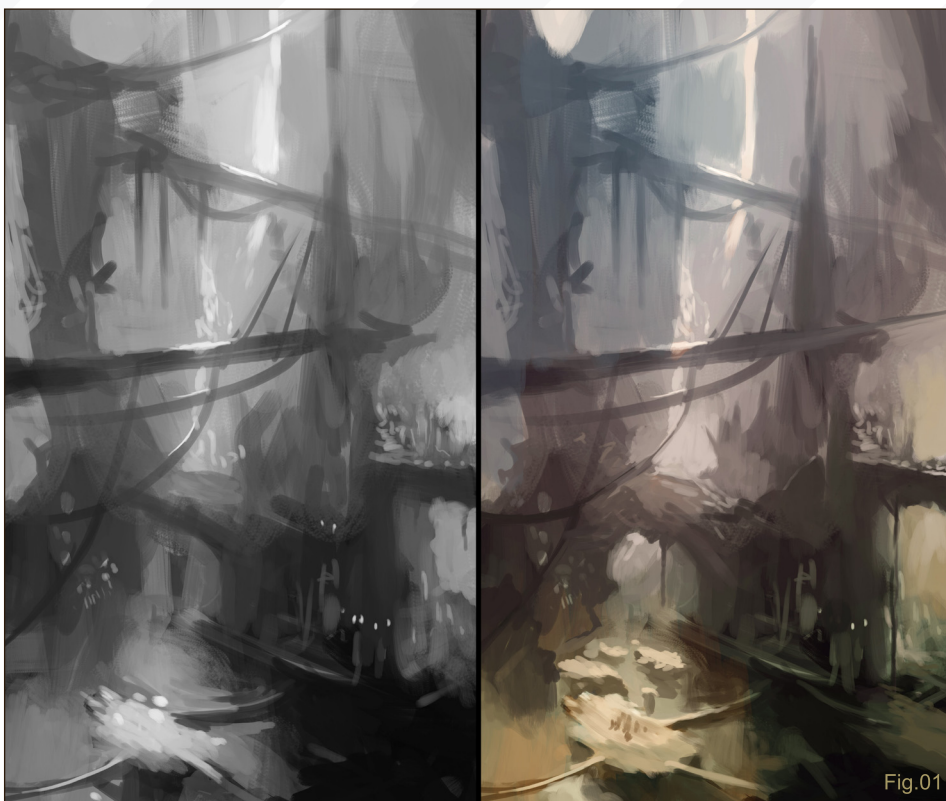


Fig.01



Fig.02

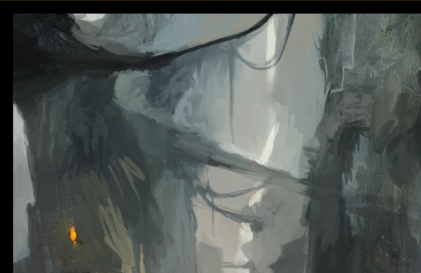
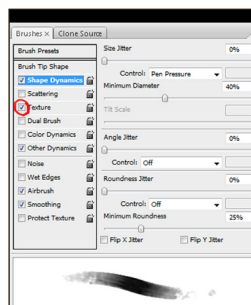


Fig.03

STAGE 1

I started this piece by working in greyscale and roughing in the main values to create the shape of the cave. I usually start straight from colour, but I wanted to experiment with starting from greyscale since I know of many great artists who start working in values first. During the preliminary sketching process, I kept in mind the general concept I wanted, as well as allowing random shapes to conjure up the cave's organic dimensions. Sometimes, random strokes can make a subject matter more interesting and give it more energy. As such, randomness did play a part in this piece, especially since the subject matter allowed for a lot of flexibility.

After some trials and paint build up, I eventually reached a stage where I felt I had captured the general mood and feel that I had been aiming for from the beginning. From there, I added another layer and started adding subtle colours, using an airbrush to “feel” the work. Personally, I think that this stage is the most important, as later stages will mainly be on rendering and making adjustments to the work (**Fig.01**).

STAGE 2

Here, I tried to increase the contrast of the work and to differentiate the forms better by painting in darker tones to the walls of the cave. I zoomed in and out occasionally to tighten up some particular spots that I wanted to be the focus. Also, I rendered and gave the work more form to make the work more easy to read. I then played with some orange glows to add to the mysterious mood of the place (**Fig.02**).

STAGE 3

This was the longest stage in the whole creation process. By this point I had already captured the main bulk of forms I wanted. To move on to the next level, I had to render in the details in high-res. I looked for a photo of leaves/grass and took the image to texture my brush under the brush options. To create the illusion of form, I used a technique similar to cross-hatching to paint the hills. In cross-hatching, lines are used to depict forms by placing the lines in such a way that they flow along the direction of the intended forms. Adopting this idea, I started to paint in the lines, stroke by stroke, in the direction of the sloppy hills. After several layers of line painting, I had created a cave with several hills and “bulges” (**Fig.03**).

STAGE 4

At this final stage, I painted in the settlements and birds with white to increase the serenity of the work, as well as to make the composition slightly more interesting. The final touches included adding some minor highlights and shadows to accentuate the forms (**Fig.04**).



Fig.04

YAP KUN RONG

For more from this artist visit:

<http://krypt.cgsociety.org/gallery/>

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Fig.05



"THE TEXTURE IS HERE TO ENHANCE, NOT TO OVERPOWER THE WHOLE PAINTING. DO NOT MAKE IT LOOK TOO STRONG OR INTRODUCE TOO MANY TEXTURE MAPS AS THIS WILL MAKE THE PAINTING LOOK CONGESTED AND STIFLING."

TEXTURE

With the use of Photoshop Leong Wan Kok, walks us through the steps he took in this image creation process.

MAKING OF HEAD HUNTER

CREATED IN:

Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

Hi, I'm Wan Kok and I have been involved in the art industry for almost 12 years now. Throughout my career, I've been exposed to lots of different ways of creating digital artwork for the games industry, post production and publishing companies. These experiences have somehow helped build up my personal way of rendering scenes. In this tutorial, I'm happy to share my techniques with you, and I will walk you through the many steps that I take in the image creation process, from the initial conceptual work through to the final rendering. I'll also include you in some of the artistic decisions that I make along the way!

This tutorial is divided into five main sections: Research and Concept; Preparing your Canvas for Colouring; Colouring; Texturing; Final Touch Ups. These will be summed up in 10 steps.



Fig.01

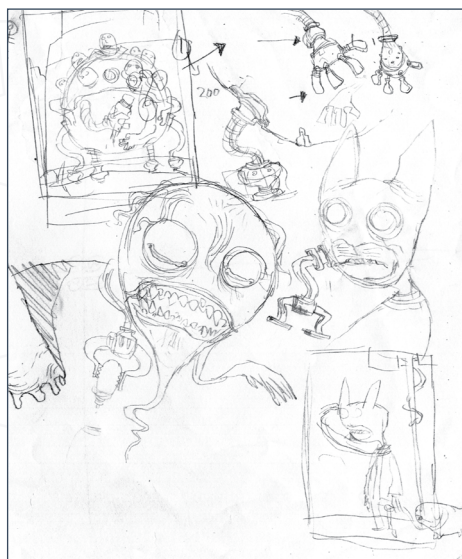


Fig.02

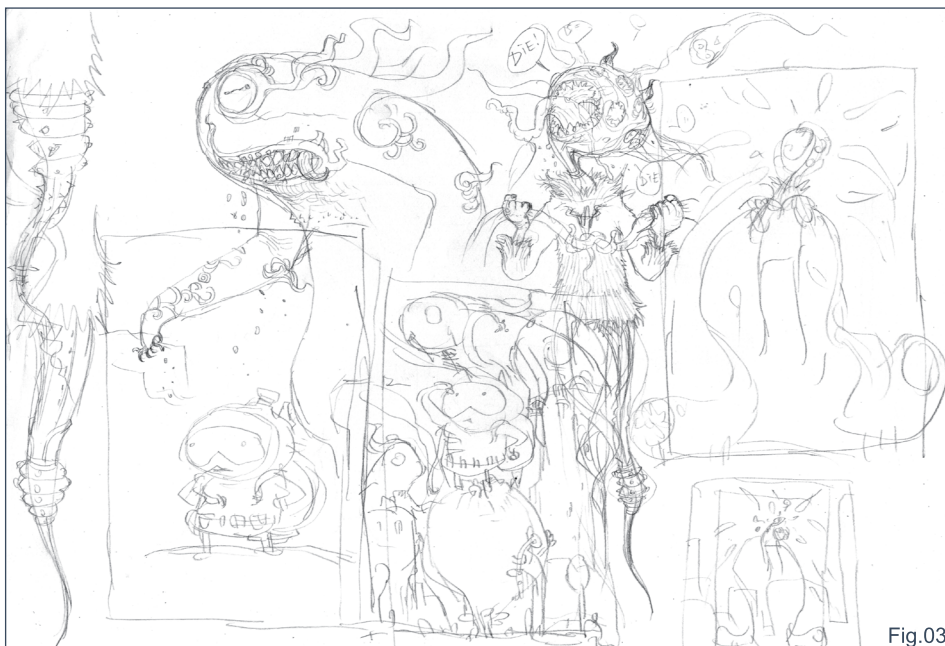


Fig.03

Each step along the way will be accompanied by a screen capture from Photoshop, explaining the tools and methods I used.

As always, it is vital to know what your artistic direction is prior to painting. What kind of style, design element, the canvas size, final output file format, etc. These are essential! If you have not received any brief from your art director, then ask! Alternatively, if this is your personal project then I strongly advise you to plan one out as this will definitely save you time in the end.

DESIGN AND CONCEPT SKETCHES

Design your characters and roughly work out some thumbnails – keep them rough and sketchy. In this stage, let your creative juices flow and sketch as many ideas as you like. If time permits, develop your world! Think of the environment your characters will dwell in and what kind of climate and clothing they might wear. What are their characteristics? Consider these questions and slowly you will start to “feel” your painting. Make it fun! Once you’re happy with your design, start planning your layout and try experimenting with various layout designs (Fig.01, Fig.02 and Fig.03).



Fig.04

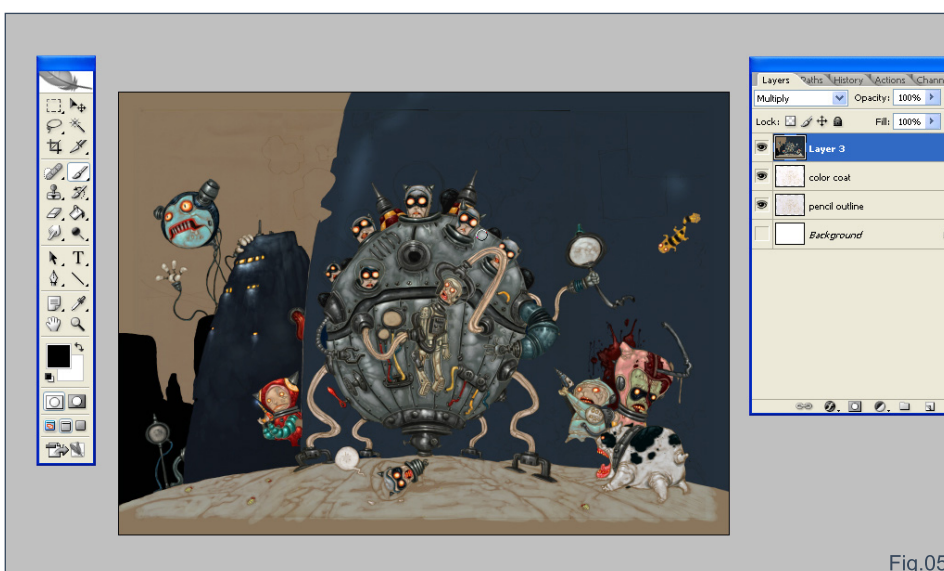


Fig.05

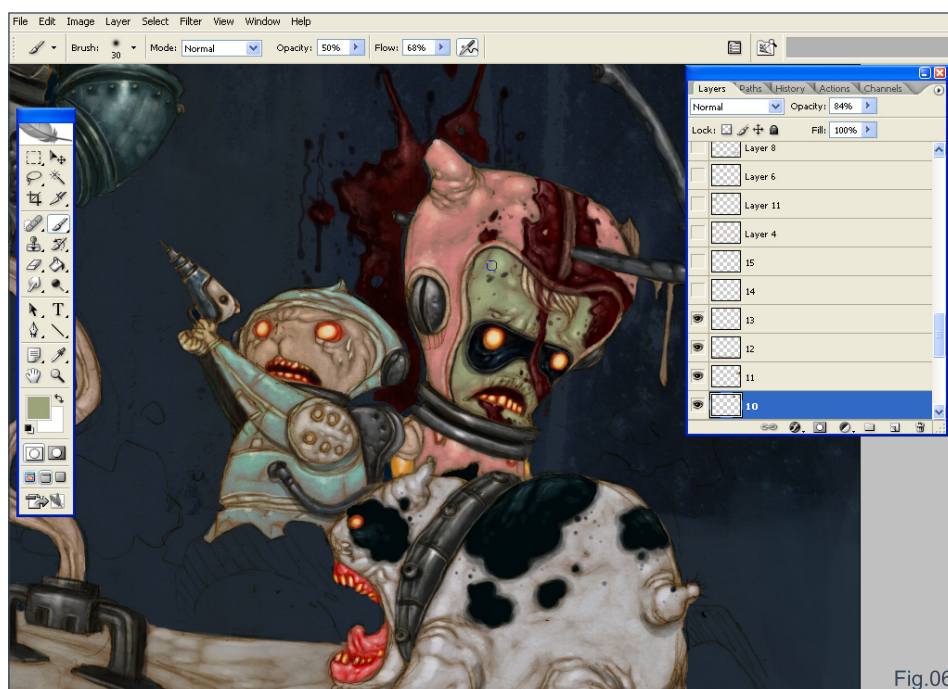


Fig.06

PRIOR TO COLOURING

Once the layout is done, get it scanned. Usually I go with 300dpi, greyscale (some prefer colour scale). I opt for this option because it gives a certain touch to the pencil outline. I usually don't ink my pencil outline. Open the scanned file in Photoshop and make sure the pencil layer is set to “Normal” blending mode.

COLOURING

On top of the pencil layer, open a new layer. Choose the “paint bucket” tool (“G” shortcut key) and fill the whole canvas with a suitable dark colour. Here I go with warm browns for the basic coat. Turn the layer to “Multiply” blending mode so that the underneath layer is still visible. For my own personal liking, I always start colouring

HEAD HUNTER

Making Of

2d
Artist

the characters first then work on the background later. This way it helps me to judge the colour relations amongst the characters more precisely. At this stage, give your canvas overall flat tones. Do not worry about the detail just yet. I love to work with my brush opacity set to 20-50% and "Flow" set to 68%. It simply builds up the colour nicely this way (Fig.04 and Fig.05).

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Make full use of the layering function (you can create a new layer by typing Ctrl + Shift + N). This is most advisable as you can always return to that layer and make changes if need be. Bear in mind that the more layers you have, the heavier the file will be, so you will need to balance it out. Merge selected layers by pressing the "Ctrl + E" shortcut keys.

Change the brush sizes by exploring the brush list. Call out your brush (press the "B" shortcut key) and control the diameter using the "]" shortcut key to increase the size, and "[" to decrease. Remember to save your files regularly to back up your work. (Fig.06)

TEXTURE MAPPING: PT1

This is one of the fun parts and the most challenging process. To give the painting a unique, rusted look, I chose a rusted metal

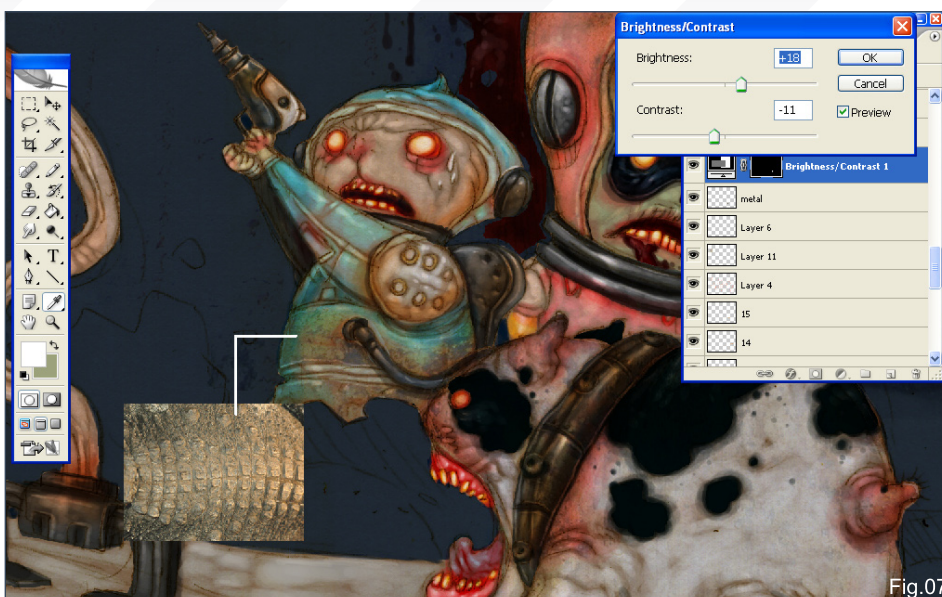


Fig.07

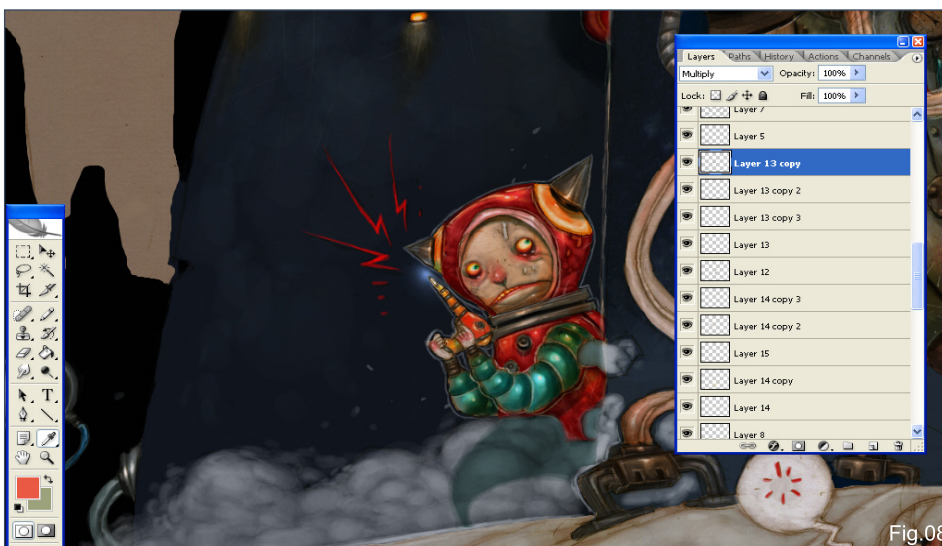


Fig.08

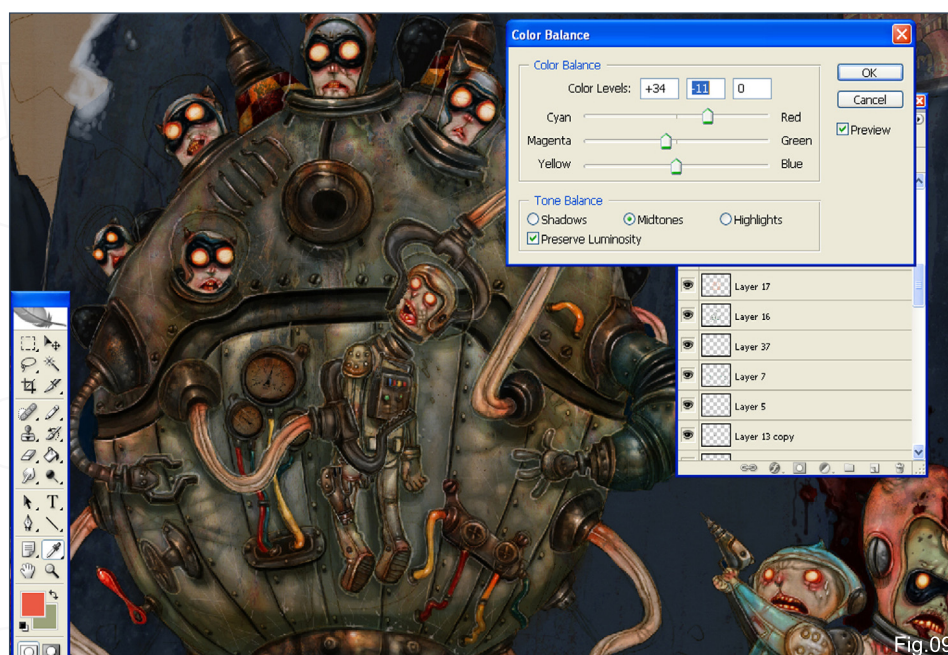


Fig.09

texture as my base. Open a new layer, paste the texture in, and set the layer mode to "Multiply". Decide where you want to map the texture. Move and scale the texture to the right size. Make sure the texture size is relative to the painting or else it will look out of place. Delete the areas you do not need (the texture). Once nicely mapped, change the texture's opacity. Adjust the brightness/contrast of the texture and erase the hard edges of the texture using the Eraser tool, or press "E" to call it up. Make sure it looks subtle and merges well with the painting. (Fig.07)

COLOUR EXPANSION

I usually keep on painting one character until it's done. I feel comfortable seeing the characters

take shape one by one. This is my preference. As you will notice, I'm moving on to the second character at this stage. As usual, I press Ctrl + Shift + N to create a new layer to paint on. Toggle between "Normal" and "Multiply" for your layer blending mode. For the shadows I go for Multiply; for detail and new colouring work I go for Normal. Try these out and you will get the feel of it! (Fig.08)

TEXTURE MAPPING: PT2

Repeat step five. Important note: subtlety is the keyword here! The texture is here to enhance, not to overpower the whole painting. Do not make it look too strong or introduce too many texture maps as this will make the painting look

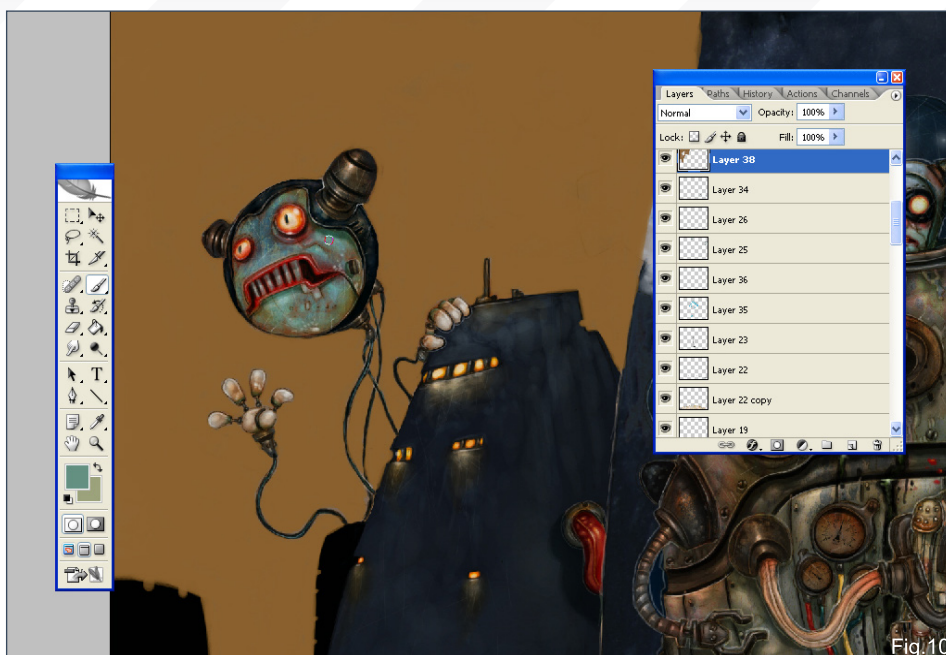


Fig.10

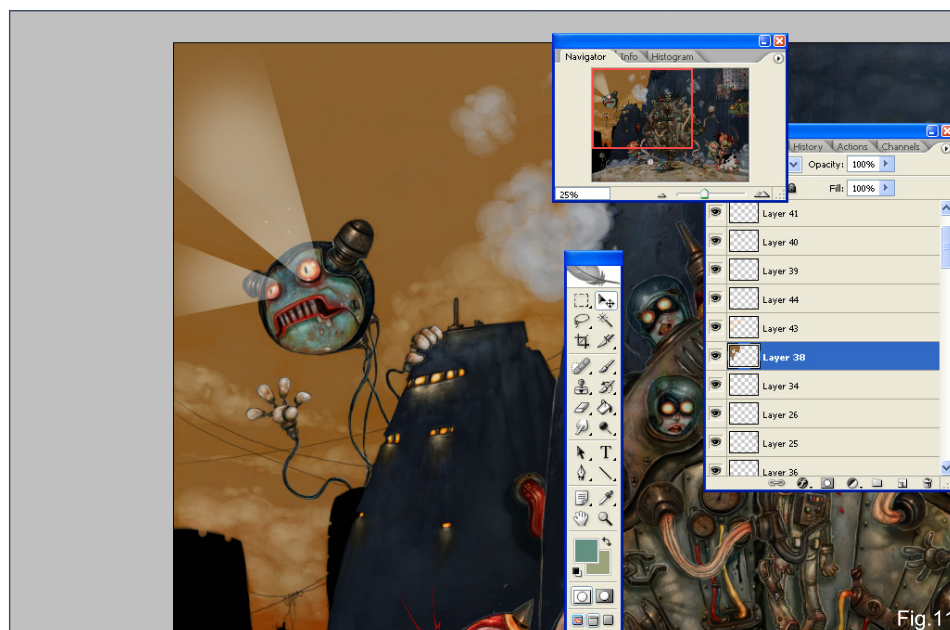


Fig.11

congested and stifling. Balance is the art here. If you need to, make colour adjustments to the texture map. Various shortcuts can be:

- Levels (Ctrl + L)
- Curves (Ctrl + M)
- Color Balance (Ctrl + B)
- Hue/Saturation (Ctrl + U)

Make sure the original textures look "flat" by erasing the lighting and shadows on them before mapping! You can combine the above methods, or choose just one or two. Try them out! (Fig.09)

DECORATION AND ACCESSORIES

A nice painting consists of not only catchy character design work, a focal point and a good layout, but also the introduction of small elements and details. These will definitely spice up your work! Add some supporting characters here and there – make it fun! (Fig.10)

CANVAS NAVIGATION

This is where the painting seems to be coming close to an end (but it's actually far from it!). Maintain your patience. I know from experience that when the painting comes close to being finished, it's sometimes tempting to rush it a

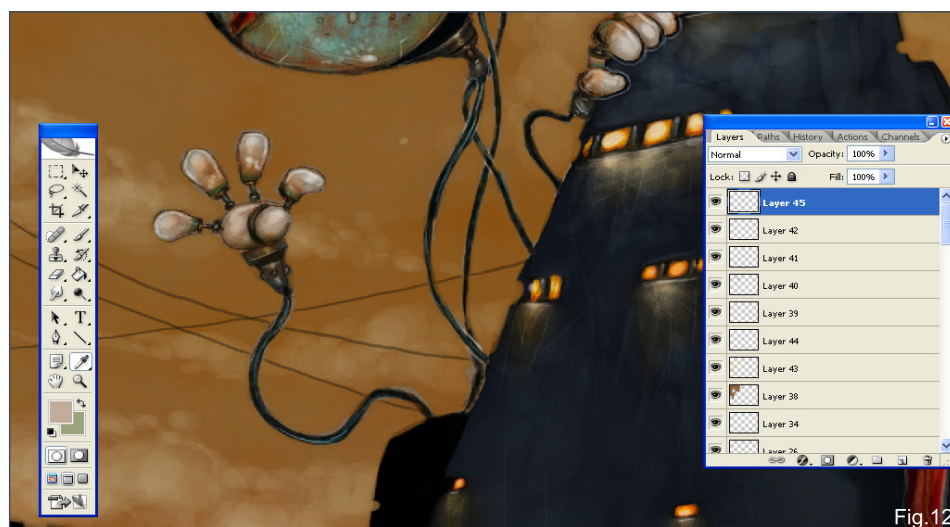


Fig.12



bit. But do refrain from that! Be patient and stay focused.

It's always good to have a navigator in your scenes. With the navigator, you can view the overall painting in a small individual window without having to constantly zoom in and out. Professional tip: you can turn on the navigator (under Window) to ease your viewing of the overall painting (Fig.11)

FINAL TOUCH UPS

Look at your painting from a distance. Close your eyes halfway to view the colour combinations again. Look out for areas where the colour is "popping out". Fix it; add final touch ups and details. Detail is the key here and it can either make or break the painting. Adjust the colours for the last time. Finally, hit "Tab" on your keyboard to close all the windows

and leave the file alone. Turn the file into a full screen by pressing the "F" shortcut key. Take a good look at your rendering – look closely this time. When you have a smile on your face then you'll know you have a great piece of artwork that you can be proud of.

PROFESSIONAL TIP

As you work towards finishing your painting, it is a good idea to close all windows and have your artwork turned into a full screen from time to time. By having your painting alone on the screen, with no other windows clustering your monitor, any "mistakes", in term of colour combination or choice of colour used in certain areas, will be more obvious. Therefore, if you feel your artwork has some artistic problems, but you cannot seem to put your finger to it, then this is a good option that you can opt for!

Type "F" once = full screen, grey background

Type "F" twice = full screen, black background
Type "F" three times = back to normal window mode (Fig.12)

I hope you have enjoyed going through this tutorial and I thank you for reading it. Happy painting!

LEONG WAN KOK

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The background of the entire page is a dark, moody digital painting. It depicts a creature, possibly a dinosaur or a large reptile, standing in a desolate, ruined city. The creature is covered in dark, scaly skin with some lighter patches. It has a long, thick neck and a head with a small crest. The city around it is in ruins, with crumbling buildings and debris. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of mystery and decay. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, greys, and browns, with some lighter areas where the creature's skin or the city's architecture is visible.

artist

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2d
ARTIST

DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 2

With the release of 3DTotal's new book, 'Digital Art Masters: Volume 2', we have some exclusive chapters for you...

This book is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

"Ye Pirate Muncher" by Jonny Duddle



The following shots of the "Ye Pirate Muncher" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...



© JONNY DUDDLE

YE PIRATE MUNCHER

BY JONNY DUDDLE



INTRODUCTION

Ye *Monstrous Pirate Muncher* was an image I originally painted for an online creature contest. It was done over a few lunch hours in Photoshop CS and was always meant to be a quick concept (Fig 01). It's had some great feedback since it has been displayed on my website, so I decided it was time to develop it into a more "finished" illustration. My aim was to give the illustration a more professional finish, without losing any of the concept's appeal.

I've worked as a Concept Artist in the computer games industry for eight years, and the software of my choice has always been Photoshop, but over the last six months, I've started to seriously dabble with Painter 12. In that time, it has become an important tool in my workflow, and it's even making an impact on my style and approach to digital painting. I wanted a more traditional painterly look for the *Pirate Muncher* illustration, and so Painter seemed the obvious choice.

THE PAINTING

I do most of my sketching directly in Photoshop. I have a couple of custom brushes that I feel comfortable with,



Fig 03



Fig 01



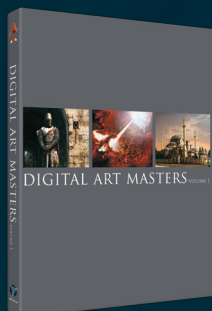
Fig 02

and whilst composing an illustration I find Photoshop's layers more flexible than the layers in Painter. I'm also a big fan of Photoshop's transform tools, and constantly play around with the scale and proportions of my sketches until I'm happy. I took the original pencil sketch from the first *Pirate Muncher* concept and made some modifications in Photoshop (Fig 02).

The sketch was pretty rough, but had enough information for me to begin painting, so I switched to Painter. The first task was to block in some base colors and establish the overall palette. In this case, I had the original illustration as reference. I used the color picker and sampled colors in the existing palette to form the basis of the new version. The drawing was on a separate "multiply" layer above the gray background, which enabled me to paint beneath the lines at this stage. I tend to work from dark to light colors, so the base colors were kept fairly subdued (Fig 03).

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With the base colors in place, I dropped the opacity of the sketch layer and flattened the image. Then I scaled up the image. Because the *Pirate Muncher* is such a big sea monster and the pirates are very small, a larger canvas meant that the detailed areas would be less fiddly to paint. But before I started painting in the pirates, the ship and the other fun details, I needed to render the sky and clouds.

I try to work with a limited number of layers in Painter, because I'm aiming to mimic a more traditional painted illustration and it's the limitations of painting directly on a piece of paper with no layers and no "undo" that often give a traditional painting many of its more



Fig 05a



Fig 05b



Fig 06



Fig 04

appealing qualities. But layers can be useful, and I created a separate layer to paint in the silhouettes of the surface details that I would paint over with the clouds, such as the ship mast and the rising tentacles.

The clouds in the original concept were one of the elements that I most disliked, so I took some digital photographic references from my attic window and painted in some more realistic clouds. I used the "Smearly Bristle Spray" from Painter's "Oils", which blends and swirls with paint on the canvas to great effect. It was perfect for the clouds, which I finished off with some edge details and some grainy blenders to establish the strong shapes (Fig 04).

With the clouds in place I decided to consolidate the detail above sea level, and made a baseline for the pirate ship. I used to work as a square-rig sailor, so I unearthed a pack of photos and used them as reference. I loved painting the stylized rigging and exaggerated hull. It took far too long and I got quite carried away painting individual ropes that will be almost invisible on the printed page, but it was great fun and brought back fond memories of climbing up and down the rigging in my sailing days! As with the rest of the painting, I tend to work by painting lighter colors over a dark base. I gave the ship a strong silhouette and built up the hull and rigging with layers of color and detail (Fig 05a-c).

The ship's trailing flag led me across the canvas to the pirates. These figures are tiny at the output resolution and were just blobs of color in the original concept. I didn't want to get absorbed in detailing a series of figures, but aimed to give them just a little bit more form and an indication of body language. I kept the costumes quite stereotypically pirate-like, whilst hopefully providing some indication of rank. The captain has the big hat and the sword and his minions are dressed in the red and blue uniforms of the lowly pirate crew. The attentive pirate who's spotted the peering eyes of the *Pirate Muncher* is in a costume that ranks him somewhere in-between. In fantasy illustrations such as this, it can make the whole job much more interesting for me (and potentially the audience) if I create a story and relationships for the characters in my paintings (Fig 06).

The *Pirate Muncher* takes up by far the largest area of the canvas, but the viewer needs to be drawn to the events on the fake island that sits upon his head. With this in mind, the painting is almost monotone below sea level and most of the detail is only hinted at. The tentacles and ships around the base of the *Pirate Muncher* are painted with fairly subtle variations of color that pick out important shapes in the murky deep. The details, such as shoals of fish and bubbles, are painted with quick blobs of color and bold highlights that

hopefully fool the viewer into seeing more detail than is actually there. The most detailed area underwater is the mouth. I painted an array of fangs which were inspired by sharks' jaws (Fig 07).

Along with being brimful of glistening teeth, the curve of the mouth is also a compositional element that tries to lead the eye to the island. The island is encircled by various details, including the swirling flag, the rising tentacles, the grinning mouth and the taut anchor chain, and these all aim to manipulate the viewer's focus. The composition of bold shapes within a painting can be a useful trick for establishing focal points.

Most of the painting was complete, but I needed to add in the final details and ensure the image worked well as a whole. This is obviously a consideration throughout the painting process, but it's easy to become absorbed by distinct areas within an illustration. In some cases I apply adjustment layers in Photoshop and tweak levels and colors to create a more unified whole, but this was unnecessary because I'd been using the original *Pirate Muncher* concept as color reference. I painted in more surface detail on the *Pirate Muncher*'s nose, using Internet references of humpback whales, and using the eyedropper to pick local colors as I painted. By picking the existing colors on the canvas and tweaking them slightly in Painter's color wheel, I could keep within the existing palette and ensure the finishing touches didn't jar with what was already painted (Fig 08).

CONCLUSION

The final illustration is an improvement on the concept, yet retains the humor and freshness of the original. I rarely return to make improvements to existing works, but in this case its popularity called out for a more professional and deserving finish. I'm happier with the new version and, whether presenting work on my website or to potential clients, I'd rather show off an image that I'm proud of which is thoroughly finished.

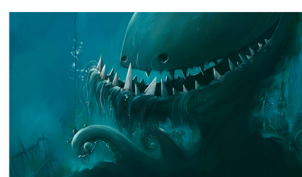


Fig 07



Fig 08

ARTIST PORTFOLIO




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"THE PEOPLE IN THE BACKGROUND
REFLECT THE EMOTIONS OF
THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE
FOREGROUND. WHO LOOK COLD. THE
MAN THAT HOLDS THE UMBRELLA
CLOSES HIS EYES AND IS ABLE TO
BLOCK THE EMOTIONS AROUND HIM.
WHICH GIVES HIM THE CALM AND
THE ENERGY TO PULL HIMSELF OUT
OF THE DEPTH"

Marcel Baumann
takes us deep into
the creation of this
highly personal and
intriguing image,
Masquerade. Many of
our Making Of's take
on a technical and
distanced approach;
however you can quite
literally feel the life
and soul of this image
as Marcel talks us
through its concept
and production on a
new level. Enjoy!

Masquerade

making of by Marcel Baumann

CREATED IN:

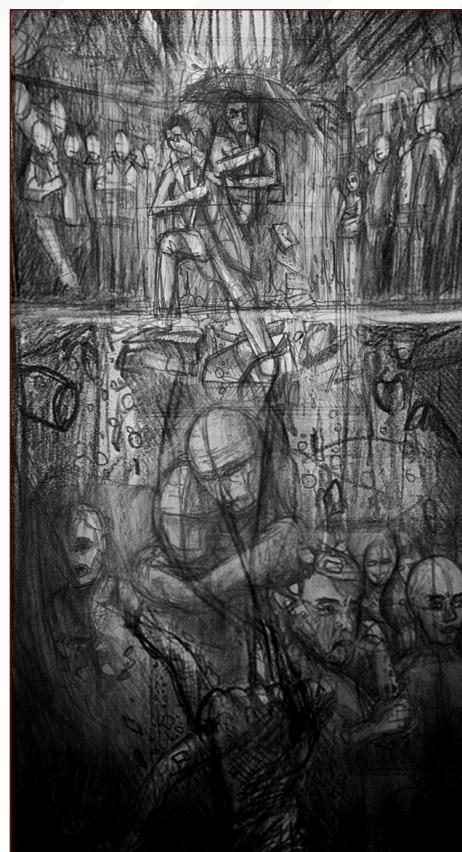
Photoshop

This digital painting, *Masquerade*, is about feelings that need to divide in order to protect oneself from damage, and it also shows the relationship between the individual and their surroundings. Maybe this piece best rewards those who have the patience to take the opportunity to look at pictures in detail, because the complex relations can only be discovered by close inspection. I think a lot of us, including me, lose that patience because we are swamped with pictures everywhere. In this piece I have



tried to encourage the viewer through the composition, the picture's language, the painting style, the forms and colours and the light, to stop and take the time for that closer look. There is something to discover here. You're not about to understand the meaning and background of every image; first it's about discovering the connections between things and opening up for the picture more and more. But I can say that every element that you see in this picture has a reason for being there. And there are reasons why the forms, colours, proportions, horizontal and vertical lines all look the way they do. The background story isn't visible, but the feelings are visible and that sense that every part of the composition has been constructed through clear thought. It's not a painting created by feelings, it's a painting created by the mind *about* feelings. I have tried to let the picture appeal to those feelings and to the mind, and to show simultaneity between different feelings that simply aren't possible with words.

The first version of *Masquerade* was my entry for the CGChallenge, “Strange Behavior”. After



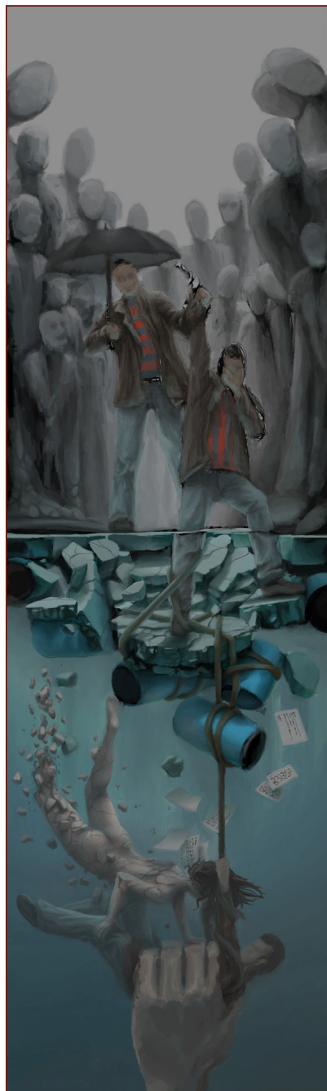
a few weeks I wasn't happy with the result and I knew that I could only erase it by over-painting and turning it into a picture that communicates not only hope but also darkness. The darkness and drama was the result of my intentions for the challenge, I think. I needed a distanced view in order to see that, and I realised that the composition didn't work too well. A few months later I began to work on the revision, until it became the painting I have in mind today.

At the very beginning I started with a few rough pencil sketches of different feelings and character poses. In the first sketch I placed the eye's horizon inside the ground plane and the water surface, between the lower inner world and the higher outer world. Because the viewer is at a certain distance from the image, he is the only one that can see all of these worlds. With the "inner" world, I mean the feelings that are hidden to the outside and that are going from the surface deeper inside. The "outer" world is the connection between the body and the outer reality. A communication isn't really possible because the people in the background can't see

underground, inside the thoughts and feelings of the main person. For this reason they have been drawn without eyes and ears.

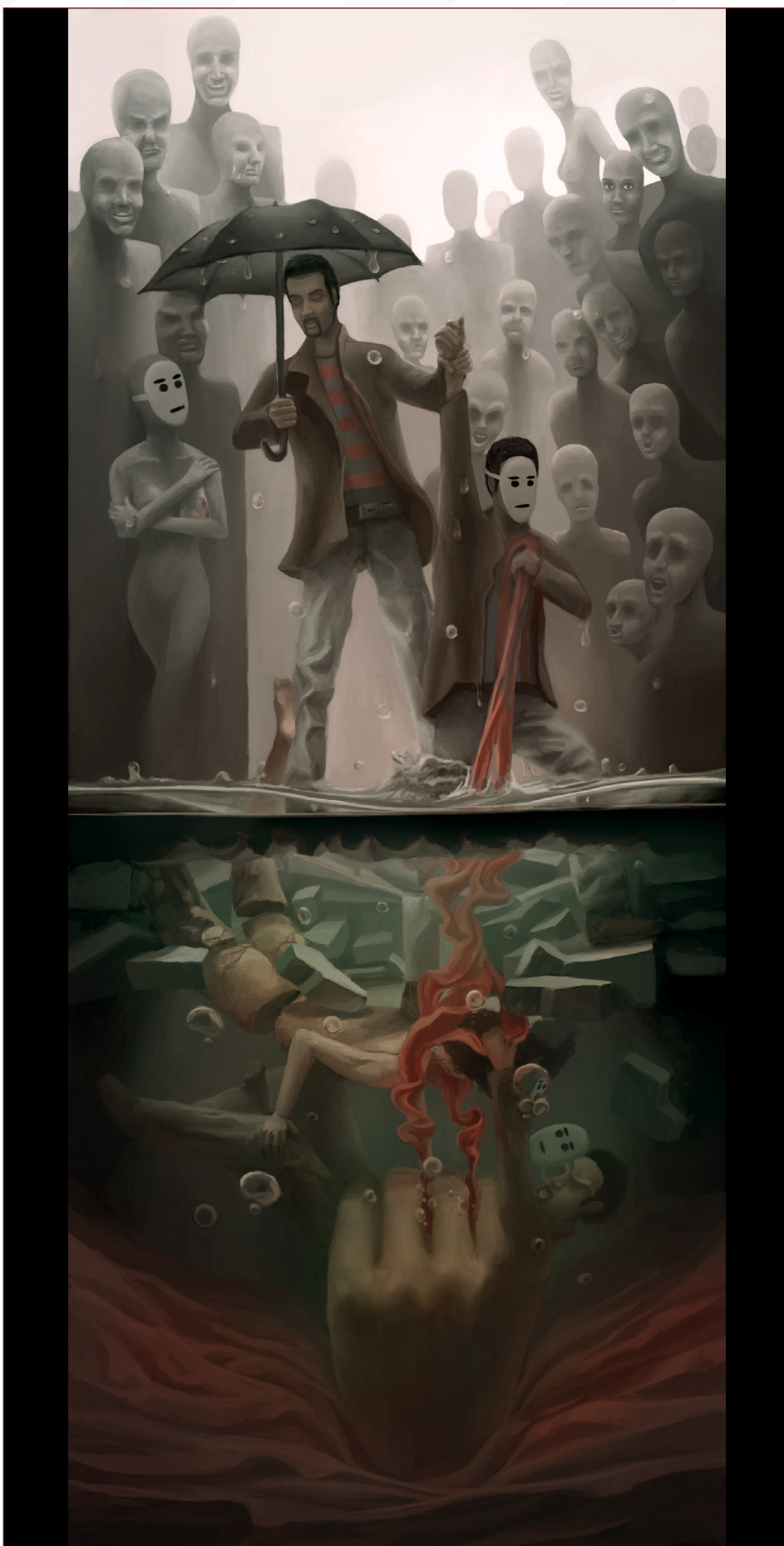
I scanned the important separate drawings and arranged them in Photoshop to get an idea for the composition and image proportions. I then experimented with adding photos and digitally sketched parts. I tried to capture the relationships between different personality parts and the connection between the feelings and the surrounding world. I had to check who pulls who and why and in which pose the characters would appear. That was quite complicated and the facial expressions changed during the process while the body language stayed nearly the same. After I had a concept picture ready for the composition, I drew the outlines on a second layer and then hid the background image. At this stage I wasn't sure about the expression of the final painting, and so I wasn't sure about the painting style. I just started to add colours and details and let the picture develop by itself.

Often, I come to ideas just because I think something could look good or it could improve the composition. In this case the interpretation comes



after and this way around, I can develop a new pictorial element that works with the background story. From time to time the picture became more structured. The conditions were clear at the end. The picture's elements need to come from the background story; they need to express it adequately and build important connections between the other elements – and they need to look good. The colours, forms and light need to integrate into the composition. The composition of the main characters told me where I had to place the new elements.

For the revision I only used the round, hard, standard brush and sometimes the soft one in Photoshop. I painted mostly on the top layer, except for elements like the umbrella, which had to be on a different layer so that I could test out some alternative positions. It would have a different appearance if the face behind



wasn't going to be overlapped by the arm, and the umbrella needed to be at a height that the masked man could reach. Through every face in the background I developed a clean, sharp and calm painting style that shows the composition, forms, lights and volume better. There was no need for realism. It calms the commotion of the composition down and reflects the mood of the man with the umbrella. For that reason I let the surfaces be more abstract, without textures.

A big difference between the revision and the first version of *Masquerade* is the image proportion. In the first version the picture was divided into two parts, because the distance was too big and the image too high. I took the polygonal tool and cut around the woman and the man in the lower part. Then I placed the copy much higher until the woman was inside the broken ground plate. That worked great with the story, so I drew her like she was part of the ground that carries the masked man. The main movement in the first version was from top into the depth – now the movements have more tension and energy at the top. I replaced the big and very strong hand with a smooth, invisible force into a smooth, organic ground.

The people in the background reflect the emotions of the main characters in the foreground, who look cold. The man that holds the umbrella closes his eyes and is able to block the emotions around him, which gives him the calm and the energy to pull himself out of the depth.

I will try to adapt the picture's language on a new personal painting I'm working on from time to time, but that one will be more expressive and some parts will be rough and quickly painted. It will be a painting inspired by feelings and the remembering of strange environments, whereas *Masquerade* was created by the mind. And I will try to create a bridge between these two paintings, because the next one will show why the man is pulled down by an invisible force and what he see with his open eyes...



MARCEL BAUMANN

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